Sam. Sumner

COMETOMANTIA.

A DISCOURSE OF COMETS:

Shewing their

Original, Substance, Place, Time, Magnitude, Motion, Number, Colour, Figure, Kinds, Names, and, more especially, their *Prognosticks*, *Significations* and *Presages*.

Being a brief Resolution of a seasonable Query, *viz.* Whether the Apparition of Comets be the Sign of approaching Evil?

Where also is inserted an Essay of *Judiciary Astrology*, giving Satisfaction to this grand Question, Whether any certain Judgments and Predictions concerning future Events, can be made from the Observation of the Heavenly Bodies?

Both occasioned by the Appearance of the late Comets in *England* and other Places.

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TO THE
Right Reverend Father
In GOD,

SETH,

Lord BISHOP
OF
SALISBURY,
AND
CHANCELLOUR
OF THE
Moſt Noble ORDER
OF THE
GARTER.

My Lord,

I Dedicate This to your Lordſhip, and if any ſhall ask the *Reaſon*, I know

no other than what all *England* knows as well as I, and that is the place you hold in the Church, and in the Eſteem of the Learned World, your great and admired Worth, your Skill in the profoundeſt Sciences, of which your Excellent Works of *Aſtronomy*, and particularly your Prælections of *Comets* are an undeniable demonſtration. Thoſe that know either your Lordſhip or me, will not ſay I flatter you; for your vaſt Merits command all that can be ſaid, and for my part I am not inclined to fawn upon any Perſon.

I can-

I cannot expect, my Lord, you ſhould approve of this inconſiderable Preſent, yet I perſuade my ſelf your Lordſhip will not be diſpleaſed at the good meaning of the Offerer. I need not acquaint your Lordſhip that it is part of one of the Canons of our Church, That *Poor Beneficed Men may go in ſhort Gowns.* Can. 74. We mean Folks, my Lord, muſt doe as well as we can. I ſubmit the whole to your Lordſhip's Cenſure, and hope you will not lay open thoſe Faults which, it may be, none but your ſelf can ſee. But I

will uſurp no farther on your Lordſhip's Patience, than onely by begging your Pardon that I have done it ſo far already.

I am,

My Lord,

Your Lordſhip's moſt

Dutifull Son

and Obedient

Servant.

THE

THE PREFACE TO THE READER.

THou ſeeſt here that I have ſent a ſhort Eſſay into the World; and I doubt not but it will be an evident Conviction to all ſober Minds of the Preſaging Nature of Comets.

Comets. That which I have to ſay in behalf of the Piece is this, that I never met with ſo much on this Theme in any Writer, whether Engliſh or Latin, or of any other Language. If I had, I proteſt to Thee ſeriouſly I would not have troubled Thee with this Eſſay of mine. To be plain, if what is here preſented be not the moſt rational and impartial, the fulleſt and beſt Account that hath hitherto been given of the Doctrine of Comets, *and of* Judiciary Aſtrology, *I am ſure it is that which I intended ſhould look ſomething like it. Nor do I pronounce this in Oſtentation, for I have con-*

conſidered the Point it ſelf, and I have likewiſe read other Mens Accounts. I may ſay with Seneca, (*in the Book where he purpoſely treats of Comets*) *That I have ſearched and enquired* nec cum fiducia inveniendi, nec ſine Spe. *I abandoned all* Confidence *and* Preſumption *in this preſent Inquiſition, but withall I* Deſpaired not *of attaining to True Notions and Sentiments in this matter. I hope it will not be looked upon as an unpardonable Crime, that I have got out of the common Road ſometimes, or when I light into it, that I keep not pace with other Travellers.* Sen. *Nat. Qu. l.* 7. *c.* 29.

I de-

I declare I am for a free and rational way of thinking and diſcourſing. I have a great fancy for Rabbi Achiva's *Advice,* Ne coquas in eadem olla in qua ſocius tuus jam coxerit, *Do not blindly adhere to what others have maintained. Brag not of other Mens Inventions, but ſhew ſomething of thy own.*

I might tell the Reader that I have endeavoured to proceed with all Caution and Modeſty, and have avoided the Imputation which generally lies upon thoſe who handle this Subject, viz. *their fond and idle way of* Pointing peremptorily at ſuch and ſuch particular E-

vents

vents *which ſhall* certainly *follow the Appearance of Comets. Beſides, I have in* other *things ſtudied to deliver my ſelf with all* Moderation, *which I am ſure will not be diſpleaſing to thoſe who are Maſters of Reaſon and Prudence. I could have ſaid much more upon the Subject. The Reader may perceive from the numerous heap of particulars here inſerted, that I might have ſpun this Diſcourſe into a far greater Length, and ſwelled it into a larger Size. I have* hinted *Arguments, and* contracted *ſome Topicks, which I could eaſily have enlarged. But I was unwilling*

to

to be tedious, and I had a mind the Reader ſhould riſe with an Appetite. As for the Idle *and* Envious, *and ſuch who reſolve that none ſhall ſee any thing of theirs in Publick, I expect that they ſhould cavil at my Endeavours. They that* ſit ſtill *and* cannot afford to write, *are the* dreadfulleſt Objectors, *the* foreſt Criticks *of all. I have nothing to add now, but to bid defiance to Them, and to wiſh the Ingenuous and Candid Reader to doe ſo too.*

THe Abſence of the Authour hath occaſioned the omiſſion of theſe two Clauſes, which the Reader is deſired in his peruſal to inſert in the following places: *viz.* Page 18. Line 14. inſert [And, which is the greateſt Luſtre and Credit of this Opinion, I find it eſpouſed by that Profound Philoſoper, and Reverend Prelate of this Nation, the preſent Lord Biſhop of *Sarum*: He aſſerteth that Comets are Perpetual Bodies, and that no new Comets appear, but the very ſame which were ſeen before.] Page 59. line 1. inſert [And I might tell you here what a great Light of our Church and of Aſtronomy ſaith in the Concluſion of his Excellent Diſcourſe concerning Comets: *Tædet me divinationis in re tam incerta:* I am weary of divining (ſaith he) upon this uncertain Subject: All our Philoſophy here is but Conjectures and Surmiſes.

Prælect. de Comet.

ERRATA.

PAge 19. line 22. read *Manilius*, p. 23. l. 17. r. *Julius Cæſar Scaliger*, p. 27. l. 11. r. *Libertus Fromondus*, l. 16. r. *aſſert*, p. 40. l. 3. r. *the force*, p. 41. l. 18. r. *Conick*, p. 52. l. 17. r. *diſquiſition*, p. 57. l. 19. r. *turning*, p. 63. l. 4. r. *Impoſtures*, p. 119. l. 16. r. *and Aſſiſtant*, p. 124. l. 18 r. *divinitus*, p. 268. l. ult. r. *vacavi.*

Come-

Cometomantia.

A

DISCOURSE

OF THE

Original, Subſtance, Place, Time, Magnitude, Motion, Number, Colour, Figure, Kinds, Names, and more eſpecially the *Prognoſticks*, *Significations* and *Preſages*

OF

COMETS.

I Have obſerved that ſome of late, who think they make no inconſiderable figure in the Age, have bore up very briskly againſt that common and ſo long received Opinion, That the Appearance of Comets is ominous,

and portends ſome calamitous Events to the World. They look upon This as a mere vulgar Errour, and will not be perſuaded that it hath any other Foundation than the prejudicate Fancy and Imagination of the deluded People. I muſt freely profeſs my ſelf to be one that hath other Notions of this matter; and having ſatisfied my ſelf about it, I will try whether I can do the ſame to others: For I take it to be a laudable Endeavour, and at preſent a ſeaſonable one, (we having ſo lately been allarmed by the ſight of ſuch glaring Bodies in the Heavens) to propogate the Sentiments which I have of this Doctrine, and to reduce thoſe that are miſtaken to right Apprehenſions of it.

Four things then I deſign:

1. To enquire into the *Nature* of Comets, that is, (as the Title of this Treatiſe gave it you) their Original,

ginal, Subſtance, Place, Motion, Figure, (which laſt contains the different Species or Kinds) and whatever other circumſtances and Phænomena belong to them, and from all theſe, and the different Diſputes, Controverſies and claſhing Opinions concerning them, to evince them to be *Extraordinary* and *Portentous.*

2. I will from the conſideration of the true Nature of *Cauſes* and *Signs* prove them to be both *Effectual* and *Significant*, and particularly that they bode Calamities and Evils to the World.

3. I will add the numerous ſuffrage of ſacred and prophane Authours to back my Opinion; for though I confeſs I never thought the Cauſe of Truth was to be decided by majority of Votes, yet in this Caſe I dare venture to put it to the Poll.

Laſtly, I will anſwer the Objections which are brought to invali-

date my Aſſertion, and there among my Replies to other Cavils, I will purpoſely encounter *Judiciary Aſtrology*, and ſoberly and impartially give my Notion of it; which if it prove not to be exactly adjuſted to ſome Mens Meaſures, yet I hope it will be found to anſwer to the Standard of Reaſon, which I reckon to be much better.

In the firſt place I am to enquire into the *Nature* of Comets: and here I muſt begin with the *Subſtance* or *Matter* of them. But behold! (as an Eviction of what I have already ſuggeſted, and what will more evidently appear in the ſequel, *viz.* the dubious and uncertain Sentiments of Philoſophers and others about theſe Bodies) there were ſome of old who would by no means allow them to have any *Subſtance* or Conſiſtency at all, but to be mere Appearances: which is as much as to ſay, There are no ſuch things in Reality.

Reality. This Opinion is thus repreſented by *Seneca* the Philoſopher, in that Book which I ſhall have occaſion often to cite, *Quidam nullos eſſe Cometas exiſtimant, ſed ſpecies illorum per repercuſſionem vicinorum ſiderum, aut per conjunctionem cohærentium reddi.* They held that the Phænomena which are called Comets, are cauſed by the Reflexion or Refraction of the Beams of the Sun, or Moon, or the neighbouring Stars, or by a conjunction of many Stars together. They tell us at other times, that their Production is the ſame with that of the Rain-bow, the Parelion, and Halo, and that they are not diſtinct from thoſe luminous Bodies which they are near to. But certainly it is a great piece of Philoſophick Folly to think that they are mere ſhews, and not of a real conſiſtency. This might be confuted from ſeveral Topicks, but eſpecially from theſe Two: namely,

Senec. *Nat. Quæſt.* l. 7. cap. 19.

First, Their *Duration*, their conſtant and continued appearance for ſo long a time: whereas, if they were onely ſeeming and phantaſtick Spectacles, they would not hold out (as they do) ſo many days, nay weeks, not to ſay months.

Again, if they were Images they would not be ſeen *Alike*, and in the ſame Shape to all perſons in what ſituation ſoever; the Angles of Incidence muſt needs vary. But it is well known that they appear with the ſame Figure in divers and diſtant Countries to all ſpectatours: whence it is proper to conclude that they are real Phyſical Beings. Well then, granting them to be *Subſtances*, what *Kind* of ones are they, *Spirit* or *matter*? Some have had ſo high an eſteem of Comets, that they have ranked them among Immaterial and Intellectual Spirits. *Pliny*, the Elder, in the Second Book of his *Natural Hiſtory*, and the Five and twentieth *Chapter*, (which

(which likewiſe I ſhall frequently quote in the following Diſcourſe) acquaints us that the Comet which was ſeen ſeven nights together after the aſſaſſinating of *Julius Cæſar* in the Senate Houſe, was believed by the vulgar to be that Great Man's Soul received up into Heaven among the number of the Gods. *Eo ſidere ſignificari vulgus credidit Cæſaris animam*, &c. The ſame is teſtified by *Suetonius* and *Plutarch*, in the Account which they give of *Cæſar*'s Life and Death. Nay, this was not onely the conceit of the Roman Rabble, but the ſaid *Pliny* tells us, that *Democritus*, who one would think ſhould have laughed at this among the other Follies of Mankind, eſpouſed this perſuaſion, *viz.* That Comets are the Souls of Deceaſed Heroes. And (to ſee how taking ſuch Dreams and Whimſies are with ſome heads) *Bodinus* ſeems to be hugely pleaſed with it, and is very inclinable to believe that thoſe *Theatr. Natur.* l. 2.

Blazing Lights are the Souls of brave Men departed, and carried up to Heaven, and there triumphing. I might ſuggeſt here (as ſomewhat relating to this purpoſe) that the Tranſmigration of Souls into Stars was an ancient Ethnick Dream, and ſo might be the occaſion to ſome of thinking alſo that departed Spirits (if very brisk and generous) mount aloft, and preſently turn into Comets, and in thoſe fiery Manſions diſplay their priſtine vigour and mettle. Others, though they hold them not to be Souls of Men, or departed Ghoſts, yet they forſake not the notion of their being *Spirits*: that is, they maintain that they are Spirits of a lower Rank and Quality, near of kin to the fineſt and ſubtileſt matter: Thus I remember the high-flown Chymiſt aſſerts them to be a certain *Compound of Spirits*, but what he means I am not ſo skilfull an Adept as to underſtand. This only I apprehend, that

Paracelſ. *lib. de Meteor.*

He,

He, and much more Thoſe who make them to be irradiated Souls above, exalt the Nature of Comets too high. It is enough that they are of the order of *Corporeal Beings*. And being ſo, it will be asked in the next place, What are the Materials of theſe great Streaming Bodies? Are they of Terreſtrial or Celeſtial Matter? Which of theſe two are they, Earth or *Æther*? Here likewiſe Philoſophers are divided, and cannot agree on their Verdict. *Ariſtotle* and his Partiſans declare, that they are of *Earthly* Extraction, and no other than Meteors, raiſed from great heaps of dry and viſcous Exhalations. Many of the Stoicks are pleaſed to ſide with the *Ariſtotelians*, and generally all thoſe that hold them to be bare Meteors, and to be placed under the Moon, ſay they are of a Terreſtrial origine. But here again they are ſubdivided, for ſome maintain that they are Earthly matter

Meteor. l. 1. c. 7.

In-

Inflamed: Thus the great *Ariſtotle*, and ſome late Aſtronomers, as *Regiomontanus*, a groat Promoter of all Mathematical and Aſtronomical Studies, and that learned Frenchman *Piſo*, and others, hold that Comets are ſet on fire by the rays of the Sun. Whereas others, as *Heraclides Ponticus* of old, and ſome of late will have them to be ſubtile and Diaphanous matter exhaled from the Earth into the Air, and there, by reaſon of the Sunbeams which they receive into them, *Enlightened* and made bright, but not Enflamed. But that Comets are of Earthly Original, though it was credited of old, and by a few of the Moderns, yet it will hardly gain belief at this time of Day. It is now generally aſſerted, that moſt of them are above the Moon (of which you ſhall hear more anon:) and if their Seat be ſo high, it will be difficult to perſuade men that they were exhaled from the Earth.

It

It is impoſſible ſo much Matter ſhould be amaſſed together as muſt ſerve for a Comet, which is of ſo great a bulk, and laſts ſo long as ſome of them have done. If the Diametre of ſome of them be four times, nay, of the larger ſort of them, be ten times greater than the Earth, (as one who was Profeſſor of Mathematicks at *Leyden* hath calculated it, the Earth and Sea cannot afford Matter enough to make One of them.

Snellius *de Cometa anni* 1618.

This Opinion then being exploded, another is to take place, according to which the Chaldeans among the ancient Philoſophers, and the Moderns generally, as *Cardan*, *Tycho Brahe*, *Galilæus*, *Des Cartes*, and many others, affirm that Comets are conſtituted of *Celeſtial Matter*. But alas! though they agree in this in the general, yet in the Particular Explication of it they are found to diſſent from one another; for it is hotly diſputed whether

ther theſe unuſual Lights are bred from the *Effluvia* of all the Planets, or from the Sun alone, or from the other Stars. *Hevelius* the Learned Profeſſor of Mathematicks at *Dantzick* undertakes to decide the Controverſie by avowing that they are made of the *Effluvia* and Evaporations of both Erratick and Fixed Stars, but eſpecially of the Sun, there being ſo great an Exhalation of matter from this vaſt Body, that it is able it ſelf alone in one Year to make innumerable Comets. So that according to this Gentleman, theſe uncommon ſights in the Heavens are ſo far from being *Wonders*, that it is rather a Wonder, and againſt the courſe of Nature, that they do not always and in numberleſs Companies appear. An Aſſertion unworthy of ſo acute and ingenious a Philoſopher! for he renders the moſt Glorious Luminary of Heaven, and that which is the Maſter-piece of all the Works of the

Cometograph. l. 7.

the Creation, the moſt Irregular and Monſtrous Body in the World, whilſt he would offer this to our belief, that whereas by its natural Make, it ought to afford matter for infinite Comets, yet it perpetually acts contrary to its Frame and Conſtitution, and produces not one Comet ſometimes in Twenty Years. In my judgment this is but mean Philoſophy, and it can never prove good Aſtronomy, though I have otherwiſe a profound Reſpect for that Worthy Perſon, who by his excellent and elaborate Writings hath both merited and purchaſed a great Name and Repute among all thoſe who are addicted to Mathematical Studies, and hath particularly obliged the *Virtuoſi* in *England* by communicating his Notions to them with ſo much freedom.

Thus I have in ſome meaſure ſhewed the *Diſagreement* of the Learned Tribe about that part of the Doctrine of Comets which reſpects

ſpects their *Original*, whence I ſhall afterwards prove them to be *Extraordinary* and *Preſaging*: but it is little I have hitherto effected; I muſt haſten to diſpatch what is yet behind of the ſame Argument. Let us then ask theſe Men of Skill, What were Comets *before* they appeared to us in this ſhape, and under this Name and Character? Our great Mathematicians and Philoſophers are at odds, as to this point. If you enquire of the famous Monſieur *Renatus des Cartes*, (that man of *France* who was as great a Reformer in Philoſophy as *Calvin*, his Country-man, was in Divinity, he whoſe Philoſophy was ſo Taking and Charming, that a wiſe Queen quitted her Crown to be at leiſure to ſtudy it,) this great Man tells you they were *Fixed Stars*; for his *Hypotheſis* in brief is this, That thoſe fixed Lights have their *Maculæ*, or thick matter, which he calls

calls the Third Element; and being freed from theſe, ſometimes ſome of them come into view, and go for *New Stars*; but being overrun by them, they are abſorped into another *Vortex*, and become Comets. So that Comets are fixed Stars firſt Incraſſated, and then Apoſtatized. This is the Noble Romantick Philoſopher, who mingles Heaven and Earth together, or rather, confounds one with the other; and he that could imagine this Earth of ours once to have been a Sun, may be pardoned if he preſents us with ſuch a notion of Comets as you have heard. Others are very vigorous in defending them to be *Planets*, or *Wandring Stars*, but diſtinct from the ſeven celebrated ones, (for they hold that there are more than thoſe which are ordinarily reckoned.) The Dogmatiſts of this Perſuaſion were the Pythagorean Philoſophers of the Italick Sect, the Chaldeans

deans (as *Stobæus* relates, *Eclog. Phyſic.* c. 3.) *Hippocrates*, *Diogenes*, *Phavorinus*, *Epicurus*, *Lucretius*, &c. and of late *Cardan*, the noted Phyſician of *Milan*, *Fracaſtorius* an excellent Profeſſor of the ſame Faculty in *Verona*, *Fienus*, *Valleſius*, (l. 1. *de Philoſ. Sacr.*) and ſome others. Theſe, I ſay, contend that they are *Planets*, that is, that they are Thick, Dark, Opake Bodies in themſelves, and that they borrow all their Light from the Sun. And herein the learned *Hevelius* agrees with them, who will not allow Comets to have the leaſt Light of their own, but they receive it all, as other Planets do, from the great Source of Light, and propagate it to us by Reflexion, as is the guiſe of Planets: and hence he gathers (and conſiſtently enough with his own *Hypotheſis*) that the Tails of Comets muſt needs be made by the Sun, of which I ſhall ſpeak immediately.

And

And the French Philoſoper before named, though otherwiſe a Diſſenter, ſtrikes in here, and declares that they receive all their Light from the Sun, and in that reſemble Planets. You muſt know likewiſe, that, according to the judgment of the forementioned Philoſophers, theſe *Planets* or *Comets* (call them which you pleaſe, for it is come to that) have exiſted always from the firſt Creation, but have been hid in the Heavens for a time, and at length come into view. They ſeem to us to be New, but they are really of the ſame date with the firſt Origine of all things. *Seneca* lets you know this was his Opinion; *Non exiſtimo Cometen ſubitaneum ignem, ſed inter æterna opera naturæ.* A Comet is a *Temporary* Planet, in regard of the People to whom it appears, but otherwiſe it is from *Eternity*, ſuppoſing the World (as that Philoſopher doth, but falſly) to be ſo. A Comet is a wandring Star, that after a certain Revoluti-

Nat. Quæſt. l. 7. c. 22.

on wheels about, and comes into ſight: after it hath loſt it ſelf a great while, it finds its way into our Hemiſphere. It is a Planet that hath gone *Incognito* a long time, and hath been ſeen by none but the Sun, if our natural Philoſopher repreſents it aright: *Sunt qui hæc ſidera perpetua eſſe credunt, ſuóq; ambitu ire, ſed non niſi à ſole cerni.* They come into our ſight after a long Circuit and Riſque, and then vaniſh, and retire to thoſe Remote places where they were at firſt. And there I leave them and proceed. According to the Aſſertion laſt propounded, Comets are *ſingle Planets* not before known, ſeen and obſerved by us. Now in the next place you ſhall ſee that another pack of Philiſophers will not ſuffer them to be *ſingle Stars:* no, they muſt be *ſeveral Stars or Planets* intermingling their Lights. The Patrons of this were *Zeno*, *Anaxagoras*, *Democritus* (even that *Democritus* who held they

Plin. *Nat. Hiſt. l.* 2. *c.* 25.

they were the Souls of Heroes; for you muſt take notice, that one Philoſopher may hold two or more opinions of the ſame thing,) theſe would needs have Comets to be σύμφασις τῶν πλανητῶν ἀστέρων, ὅταν διὰ τὸ πλησίον ἐλθεῖν δόξωσι θιγγάνειν ἀλλήλων, a Coapparition of divers Errant Stars together, *viz.* when they ſeem to touch one another by reaſon of their Neighbourhood; as the great *Stagyrite* hath preſented us with their Doctrine, *l.* 2. *Meteor. c.* 8. Or as *Seneca* more briefly; Comets according to them (ſaith he) are *Conjunctio cohærentium ſiderum, (Nat. Qu. l.* 7. *c.* 10.) a Club of many Stars: and *Plures Stellæ quæ currant*, Many Stars running into one, *Nat. Quæſt. l.* 7. *c.* 3. Or, according to the Aſtronomical Poet, *Subjuncta Sidera*, Marilius, *l.* 1. *Aſtron.* Another thus, a Comet is σύνοδος ἀστέρων, a Synod, or an Aſſembly of Stars joyning their Light together. *Plutarch. de Placit. Philoſ.* This, it ſeems, was

the ſenſe of that Hiſtorian who gives an account of a Comet of a dreadfull aſpect which viſited the Eaſtern part of the World in the Year 383. and he expreſſeth it thus, πολὺ πλῆθος ἀστέρων ἠθροίζετο, &c. A great Company of Stars (ſaith he) was gathered together, and the Light which came from them all with great violence made up one huge Flame, which appeared in the likeneſs of a Sword. Some of the Moderns undertook to ſolve the Phænomenon of a Comet after the ſame manner, as *Cyſatus* Profeſſor of Mathematicks in the Univerſity of *Ingoldſtadt*, and *Licetus* a Philoſopher of *Genua*, *lib. de Novis Aſtris & Cometis.* After the rate of Theſe Mens Aſtronomy a Comet is an Aſſociation or Fellowſhip of Stars, which ſeem to be but one Star, becauſe they ſtick ſo cloſe to another. It is a *Congeries* of Numberleſs Lights which lovingly mingle their Rays together, and ſo

Nicephor. Eccleſ. hiſt. l. 12. c. 37.

ſo make as it were one long ſtragling Star. This hath ſome affinity with their Fancy who think a Comet to be a kind of Galaxy, and perhaps they might borrow their conceit from the Father of Philoſophers, who treats of the Milky Circle and Comets in the ſame Chapter, and ſeems to ſolve one by the other. From what hath been ſaid it is evident that it is not agreed among the knowing and curious, whether Comets be fixed or wandring Stars, and if they be of this latter ſort, whether they be ſingle, or ſeveral ones. That they are not a *Congeries* or Heap of Stars is excellently well proved by One who treats on this Theme deſignedly: and I am clearly of the judgment that it may as ſubſtantially be demonſtrated that they are *No Stars* at all. For weigh the nature both of the Planets and fixed Luminaries, and you will find that Comets have nothing of their qua-

Ariſtot. *l.* 1. *Meteor. c.* 10.

Senec. *Nat. Quæſt. l.* 7. *c.* 12, 13, 14.

lities and properties. It is not the nature of either of thoſe kind of Stars to be greater at firſt, and then to decay and dwindle, and at laſt to be extinct, or (as ſome few Comets have been, as *Seneca* and *Pontanus* report) to be little at firſt, afterwards to grow greater, and at length to loſe both their greater and leſſer bulk. This never was of the conſtitution of *Stars*: Nor have Comets any thing of the Motion or other Properties of Stars (as I ſhall ſhew afterwards,) and therefore I cannot diſcern how they can properly be called, or thought to be *Stars*.

Having thus far ſpoken of the *Original Matter* whereof Comets are thought, according to the different *Genius* and Sentiments of Men, to conſiſt, I come now to conſider their *Place* and *Situation*, though I have intimated ſomething already of *Theſe*, and it was neceſ-

ſary

ſary to doe ſo, becauſe their *Original* and *Place* are ſo nearly related and depend upon each other. But I will now treat of *This* more deſignedly, and from the wondrous variety and inconſiſtency of opinions concerning Comets I will advance to prove that they really are and ought to be reckoned as *Prodigies*.

And firſt let us attend to thoſe who place all Comets *below the Moon*. Theſe are the Peripateticks, and many of the Stoicks; and they are followed by Philoſophers and Mathematicians of later time, as *Regiomontanus*, *Junctinus*, *Fracaſtorius*, *Julius Cæſar*, *Scaliger*, *Claramontius*, and ſeveral others, whoſe perſuaſion is this, that Comets are ſublunary Meteors, *i.e.* Exhalations mounted up to the upper and higheſt Region of the Air, and that there they hover, and at laſt are ſet on fire and blaze. But certainly we might be brought off from imbracing ſuch a Tenet as this, by

conſidering, that if Comets were Meteors, they would jump and skip here and there, as other Meteors are obſerved to doe; and they muſt needs be ſubject to ſuch a Motion, both becauſe they are often driven with the Wind, and becauſe they cannot but be ſet on running and leaping by their own fire. Such conſiderations as theſe have mov'd divers great Philoſophers and Aſtronomers to reject the Ariſtotelian way, and to enter upon another more probable and rational. They think it a degrading of Comets to thruſt them down into the Elementary Region, and therefore they have univerſally agreed to exalt them *above the Moon.*

This was practiſed before *Ariſtotle* by the old Chaldean and Pythagorean Philoſophers, by *Democritus*, *Anaxagoras* and *Zeno*; and after their time by the Judicious *Seneca*, and ſince that by the acuteſt and moſt diſcerning Moderns, as *Cardan*,

Cardan, *Tycho*, *Galilæus*, *Keplar*, *Longomontanus*, *Carteſius*, and great numbers of other Learned Men. They prove their point by the *Paralax*, which is the *Diverſity* of ſight, or change of Aſpect, or the *Difference* between the *True* and *Seeming* Place of a Star or any other thing hanging in the Region above us. This in all the Comets that have been obſerved by them was leſſer than that of the Moon; *Ergò* they are above the Moon: For it is certain that that Body is by ſo much the more elevated from the Earth, by how much the leſſer its Paralax is, as the greater this is, the thing ſeen is the nearer; and on the other ſide, the leſſer this is, that is the further off. And for this Reaſon the ingenious French Philoſopher places Comets in the Liquid *Æther*, between the Regions of the Planets and the fixed Stars, becauſe (ſaith he) they have *none*, or an *unſpeakably ſmall Paralax* or Variation of Sight

Sight to thoſe divers ſpectators that look on them at the greateſt diſtance.

I know the greateſt Aſtronomers have differed about the Doctrine of Paralaxes, whereof the incomparable *Tycho Brahe*, and that noble Italian Philoſopher and Mathematician *Claramontius*, are a famous Inſtance. The renowned *Galilæus*, *Julius Scaliger*, and *Bodinus* laugh at the proof which is brought from the Paralax. And a skilfull perſon of late, who undertakes to be Umpire between the Ariſtotelians and Tychoniſts, concludes peremptorily that there is no Mathematical demonſtration for Comets being above or below the Moon. But it may be they mean no more than this, that Paralaxes are uncertain, or rather, that the taking of them truly and exactly is extreme difficult, the inſtruments are not every way good; and ſeveral Refractions which happen may hinder the juſt ſight. And

Ricciolus Almageſt. *lib. de Cometis.*

And now one would imagine there ſhould be no farther diſagreement than this, that ſome Comets are above, and ſome below the Moon, ſome in the Heavens, and others in the Air. But we ſhall find it otherwiſe; for a third ſort acquaint us, that the very ſame Comets are *ſometimes* below and at *other times* above the Moon: So *Chriſtopher Clavius*, *Libertus*, *Fromondus*, *Licetus*, *Reſta*, *Cabæus* Profeſſor of Mathematicks at *Genua*, *Bulialdus* that eminent Gallick Aſtronomer, and particularly the ſagacious *Kepler* aſſerts that a Comet may come down from the *Æther* into the Air. Though it was generated above the Moon, yet there is good reaſon to believe that it may fall down; and ſuch a one was that which appeared *A.D.* 1450. and eclipſed the whole body of the Moon, as the Hiſtories and Catalogues of Comets inform us. Such was that which was ſeen at *Chriſt's* Nati-

In Cometar. Phyſiolog.

Phranza. Chronic. l. 3. *c.* 20.

Nativity (if it were a Comet,) and ſuch was the famous Sword-Flame which appeared over the City of *Jeruſalem* a year together. We are ſure that two of theſe were Sublunary Comets.

Some Comets then are ſituated as *Ariſtotle* ſaith they are, and whilſt the Aſtronomers, that came afterwards, endeavour to prove the contrary, and that all the Comets that ever appeared are Celeſtial, This attempt of theirs is to be looked upon as an extreme on the other hand. It is enough to ſay that moſt Comets have been high and lofty; and indeed it was fit they ſhould be ſo, that the World might take the greater notice of them.

As I hope I convinced the Reader before, that the *Generation* and *Production* of Comets is a difficult ſearch, ſo from what hath been ſiuce delivered, I doubt not but their *Situation* and *Place* appears to be of the ſame quality. So perplexed are theſe

theſe Points, that no leſs than a douzen Opinions are reckoned up by a modern Aſtronomer concerning the *Matter* and *Place* of Comets. Ricciol. Almageſt.

There is ſtill another great difficulty to be conſidered, and that is the *Motion* of Comets, which by all Aſtronomers is look'd on as extravagant and unaccountable. Whether theſe Bodies take their Journey in a direct Line, or a circular one, and arch-wiſe (as the Planets) is diſputed by them; and at laſt it is commonly ſaid, that the way they take is tranſverſe and oblique. You may hear them cry out very deſpairingly, that they imitate neither the motion of the Sun, nor other ſettled Luminaries, but are perfectly *ſui juris*, they take their own courſe, and that commonly is very unnatural. Some go on directly in the true courſe of the Zodiack, but others run through it backward, as *Bodinus*

Bodinus (*Theatr. Nat. l.* 2.) and *Hevelius* (*Prod. Comet*) obſerve. And not onely one Comet differs from *another* in its Motion, but oftentimes from *it ſelf*: Nay, ſometimes it remains fixed in the ſame place, and ſtirs not one way or other; which our Naturaliſt ſo often alledged takes notice of, when he ſaith, *Moventur autem alii Errantium modo, alii Immobiles hærent*, *Nat. Hiſt. l.* 2. This onely is obſerved, That though ſome at one time or other have moved to all the Points of the Heavens, yet they generally and uſually veer by their own proper Motion towards the Poles. But why they appear rather without the Tropicks than within, and why they make their paſſage through *Boötes*, and the great Bear, and for the moſt part are ſeen about the Poles either Southern or Northern, but eſpecially the Northern, and why they do not ſhew themſelves in the height of the Heavens;

vens; Theſe are all *unaccountable*, that their *Motion* may be anſwerable to all *other things* obſerved in them, and that there may be ſome proof made of what I have undertaken, *viz.* that Comets are an Irregular and Anomalous ſort of Lights ſet up on purpoſe in the Heavens to invite the Inhabitants of the Earth to behold them, and to bid them doe ſomething more than that, as I ſhall ſhew afterwards.

But the main thing that puzzles is the *Figure* which Comets appear in, the affrightning *Bruſh* or *Stream* which they ſhew.

Firſt, how came they to have any ſuch thing at all? And,

Secondly, How comes it to paſs that this Stream or Blaze is always oppoſite to the Sun? And after I have examined this, I will ſpeak of the more *particular Figures* or *ſeveral Species* of Comets.

Firſt,

First then, what Philoſophy can give an account of the Flaming Bruſh which iſſues from them? But here, before I paſs any farther, it muſt be remembred that Aſtronomers ſpeak of three ſorts of Comets:

1. That which they call the *Hairy* one, *viz.* when the Rays are ſpread on all ſides alike, and are equally in a Circle expanded, like the Hair of a mans Head.

2. That with a *Beard*, which is when a Comet emits its Rayes towards that part of the Heaven to which it moves.

3. That which appears with a *Tail*, *viz.* when its Beams are extended towards that part of Heaven from which it recedes: Or the difference between the *Bearded* and *Tailed* Comet is onely from the different aſpect to the Sun: the one ſhewing itſelf before the Sun riſeth, looks towards the Weſt; the other appearing after the Sun is down, turns

turns its Stream Eaſtward. I know ſome make the diſtinction otherwiſe, namely, as to the *Erection* of the Figure, it is like a Beard or Muſtaches; and as to the *Depreſſion* of it, or Hanging down, like a Tail. But the old Dictatour of Philoſophy reduces thoſe three kinds into two, Ἀστὴρ γίνεται Κομήτης ὅπως ἂν τὸ ἀναθυμιώμενον τύχοι ἐσχηματισμένον. Ἐὰν μὲν γὰρ πάντῃ ὁμοίως, κομήτης· ἐὰν δ' ὅτι μῆκος, καλεῖται πωγωνίας. A Comet (ſaith he) is generated according to the Figure and Shape of the Exhalation which is drawn up by the Sun: if this be ſet on fire on all ſides alike, and be exactly round, then it is properly called a Comet, or *Hairy Star*; but if it be extended in length, then 'tis a *Bearded one*: And this comprehends under it all the blaze and ſtream of Light which proceeds from Comets, call it *Beard*, or *Tail*, or what you pleaſe. Ariſtot. *Meteor.* l. 1. c. 9.

The former of theſe (which

Ariſtotle ſaith is the *True Comet*) is ſeldom ſeen, and I do not remember that I ever read above two or three Inſtances of it. The latter is the more known and celebrated kind, and may, by that great Philoſopher's leave, be properly called a Comet, according to the true Etymology of it expreſſed by the Poet,

Manilius *Flamma Comas imitata volat, tenuéſque Capillos.*

Now it may deſervedly be asked, What is the Reaſon of this ſtrange Figure? Why do not Comets appear to us round, (be they flat or diſciform in themſelves, as ſome imagine, that is not much to the purpoſe, but) why do not the whole bodies of the Comets appear to be Globous, as all other Stars, both fixed and erratick, ſeem to be? What makes thoſe differ from theſe? Why are the Rays and Splendour of

of a Comet carried further than that of other Stars? Why ſends it forth ſuch ſtragling Beams? Since the Figure of all Stars is Globular or Sphærical, what cauſes a Comet (if it be a Star) to be of a long Figure? Why do not all other Stars ſhoot out ſuch Streams as this? I deſire not to make difficulties, but certainly theſe Queſtions have not been ſolved to the ſatisfaction of any diligent and curious Enquirer. Such Reaſons as the learned have ſuggeſted I will ſet down, and I am confident that it will be made clear from them, as from all other things appertaining to Comets, that they are a ſort of Phænomena which were made to puzzle the World, and that their *ſtrange Nature* ſignifieth to us their *more ſtrange events.*

I am to let you know then, that, according to the different Hypotheſes taken up, ſome write, that the Tail or Beard is *part* of the Comet; others on the contrary as ſtif-

ly maintain, that it is *not part* of it, but is onely the Rays of the Sun ſhot through the Comet's Head.

Firſt, It is ſaid, that the Tail is part of the Comet, or (as *Seneca* repreſents *Apollonius* his judgment) the long Tail is the form of this kind of Planet: The Body of the Star is made of this Figure. But, according to *Ariſtotle*, *i.e.* if it be a Peripatetick Comet, the *Head* of it is ſuppoſed to be troubled with *Fumes* and *Vapours*, and theſe being over-heated by the Sun, are ſet on fire, and ſo the *Tail* is no other than the flame of the burning Meteor.

But ſeeing a Flame by its natural Lightneſs tends upwards, why is not the Tail of every Comet exactly erect? For they ſuppoſe Comets to be low, and their Flame to be ſeen in its juſt proportion, whereas the fixed Stars and others are not ſuppoſed

ſuppoſed to appear Sphærical, becauſe of their vaſt *Diſtance* from us, which confoundeth all diſtinction of Figures. One very Aſtronimically skill'd ſolves it thus: Piſo's *Specul. Comet.*

The Flame of the Comet (ſaith he) doth not move directly upwards, and appear erect becauſe of the ſolid Orb above it; (for he believes theſe Comets with Tails or Beards are in the Concavity of the Orb of the Moon:) hence the Flame is forced downwards, juſt as the Flame in an Oven or Fornace, beaten from above, ſtrikes towards the ſides. But if it be ſo, how happens it that the Flame is not ſeen on both ſides or ends, but onely on the hinder part of the Comet? How comes that part which is next to the Sun to be always without a Train or Stream? The Flame of the Comet is driven by the *Wind* towards one ſide, as we ſee plainly in Torches when the Wind blows, ſo the Peripateticks give an account

of the Tail or Buſh of a Comet. But if it were cauſed by the Wind, then there muſt be always a great Wind ſtirring as long as Comets appear, and the Blaze of theſe would increaſe as that increaſes; but I never read that any ſuch Obſervation was made, and we know by experience that Calms have accompanied the Appearance of Comets, whatever violence of Weather happened afterwards.

Beſides, if the long Train were occaſioned by the Wind, it would alſo diſappear when the Wind is allaid. Moreover, the Wind hath not blown from the ſame Point of Heaven all the time of the Comet's appearing. And that it ſhould doe ſo to all Comets is yet ſtranger: You may as well ſay, and maintain it, that the Wind is ever in the ſame Corner. But, after all, if I ſhould add, that Comets are above the Wind, as it is hugely probable

bable they are, then this way of ſolving the Difficulty is quite overthrown.

In ſhort, according to the Ariſtotelian Hypotheſis of a Comet being a heap of Inflamed Exhalations, I do not ſee how the Tail can be made out; for this being a Flame, and lighter and rarer Matter than the head of the Comet, it ſhould tend upwards in the form of a Pyramid, as it fares with all other Flames.

Again, ſuch a heap of viſcous Vapours muſt needs burn on all ſides, if it be equally kindled, and then the long Train is ſpoiled: or if the matter doth not burn equally, then certainly *There* where the Fuel is moſt capable; and how can that be ſuppoſed to be always juſt oppoſite to the Sun? But if the *Wind* cannot ſolve the Phænomenon the *Sun* muſt: accordingly *Kepler*, *Gaſſendus*, and others ſay, that the Tail, being of the ſame

matter with the Head, onely more rare and ſubtile, is driven and thruſt by that force of the Suns Rays towards that part of the Heavens which is contrary to the Sun.

It was ſoon ſeen that this thruſting and ſhoving of Sun-beams was a very precarious Notion; and therefore the moſt judicious Aſtronomers go another way to work. They abandon their Opinion who think the Tail belongs to the Subſtance of the Comet, and is a Flame iſſuing from it, and in ſtead of that they defend this for Truth, that the Tail or Beard is no other than the Beams of the Sun tranſmitted through the Diaphanous Head of the Comet. This is embraced by *Cardan*, *Longomontanus*, *Scaliger*, and that famous Triumvirate of Aſtronomers, *Tycho*, *Kepler*, *Galilæus*. If theſe ſay true, the Tranſparent Body of the Comet is illuminated by the Solar Rays, and the Sun, thus ſhining through it, and

and cauſing a various Refraction and Repercuſſion of Light, makes that Splendour which we call the Tail or Treſſes of a Comet. In order to this they fancy the Body of the Comet to be like a Globe or Ball of Glaſs, which by its Diaphanouſneſs imbibes the Beams received from the Sun, and thoſe Beams paſſing through it appear on the Reverſe of it. Such a kind of Trajection or ſtriking of the Sun's Rays through the Head or Body of a Comet, is the cauſe of its Beard or Tail. But this will not clear the Point; for then the Tail ſhould not be of that Figure it appears, but of a Comick one, as the Rays appear behind a Glaſs-Ball, *viz.* broad towards the Glaſs, but narrower and ſharper the other way. But the Trains of Comets appear otherwiſe, they being large and wide at the *Cuſpis*, or end, but leſſer and more contracted towards the Head of the Comet. Thus the Laws of Opticks

and

and the Rules of Perſpectives will be indangered if we tie our ſelves to this Hypotheſis.

Beſides, This is attended with other inſuperable Difficulties; for if the Comet be Diaphanous, where are the Suns Rrays terminated, and by that means reflected to us? There ought to be ſome Opake matter to ſtop the Rays, and ſo to reverberate them to us. Say that by the Tranſparency of the head of the Comet the Sun's Rays are tranſmitted, and ſo the Train is in a fair way to be made, yet there is required moreover an Opacity to receive and turn back thoſe Rays to our Eyes, that we may ſee them. This is done, if *Tycho Brache*'s ſaying ſo will ſuffice: The Rays of the Sun (ſaith he) paſſing through the Comets Head meet with ſome matter in the Æthereal Region which is darkiſh, and ſo reflects them back to us: thus the blazing Stream is produced. But,

Aſtronom. Inſtaur. Progymnaſm.

Firſt,

First, This ſuppoſes Thick and Opake Matter in the Æther, which ever before paſſed for Pure, Subtile, and Perſpicuous.

Then, Suppoſe there were ſuch Matter in the Æthereal Regions, yet if this reflexion were from the Æther, why are we ſo long without Comets? for in that Impure Æther, which lies behind the Comets, the beams are reflected conſtantly.

Likewiſe, if the Beard of a Comet had no other Production, it would be ſpread not onely towards that part of the Heavens which is directly oppoſite to the Sun, but on every ſide. And this alſo leads me to enquire after an anſwer to the *Other Queſtion* I ſtarted, *viz.* Why the Buſh or Main of the Comet always turns it ſelf from the Sun, and conſequently if it appears before Sun-riſing, it points towards the Weſt, and if it be ſeen in the Evening it ſtretches itſelf towards the

the Eaſt, ſometimes directly, at other times with ſome Deviation more or leſs, either Northward or Southward?

I having invalidated that Tenet of the Suns Beams paſſing through the Head of the Comet, and being reflected to us from I know not whence, there can no ſolid Reaſon be given of their direct Oppoſition to the Sun. And then as for thoſe who ſay the Comets propagate and tranſmit ſuch a glaring Light to us by Reflection (as all the Planets do) from the Sun, (for according to *Hevelius*, and ſome others, the Head and Tail of Comets are dark Bodies,) it is certain that if they borrow all their Light and Blaze from the Sun, there is yet a more deſparate and forlorn account given both of the Tail of a Comet, and of its Oppoſition to the Sun, and then alſo the Moon, and Saturn and all the other Planets would be Bearded or Tailed.

I might

I might now enquire into the *different Species*, the various σχήματα (as the Philoſopher calls them) of Comets. For this Stream which I have been diſcourſing of is not always of the ſame Configuration, but hath appeared in divers Shapes and Reſemblances. Theſe ſeveral Species are ſet down by an Ancient Aſtronomical Poet in a very Elegant manner, and by a Philoſopher almoſt as ancient, (I mean him whoſe Treatiſe of Comets I have occaſion often to uſe) who reckons up *Twelve ſeveral Species* of them, *Nat. Hiſt.* 2. *l.* 25. *c.* But I foreſee it will be more proper to enlarge on this particular when I come to the next general Head of this Diſcourſe, where I ſhall handle Comets as real *Signs*. In the mean time I will entertain the Reader with ſome other matter which is Pertinent to our buſineſs, and which will give him a further Inſight into the Nature and Quality of theſe mar-

Manilii *Aſtronom.* 1. *l.*

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Manilii *Aſtronom.* 1. *l.*

marvellous Appearances, and ſerve to advance the knowledge of ſuch as are inquiſitive Searchers into the Works of God.

Of the *Number* of Comets ſomewhat may be ſaid; I will give you the Sum total of the Catalogue which *Baptiſta Ricciolus* hath made, and that is 154. for ſo many Comets had appeared in the World from 480 Years before Chriſt's Nativity to the Year of our Lord 1618. His Catalogue reaches no further either backward or forward; but *Hevelius* takes a wider compaſs, for the Comets (ſaith he) recorded by the Hiſtorians, or Philoſophers, or others, from the time of *Noah*'s Floud (of what was before that, he pretends not to give any account) to this day (and he writ his *Cometographia* in the Year 1668) are in number 250. It is not unlikely that ſome others have appeared, and even from the beginning of the

the World, as when God caſt *Adam* out of *Paradiſe*, (of which anon,) but they have not been regiſtred and tranſmitted to the notice of Poſterity.

That which I ſhall obſerve to you is this, That many of theſe Comets, and others that appeared ſince, have fallen to our ſhare in a ſhort time. We have ſeen five or ſix of them in leſs ſpace than Twenty Years. For, not to go back ſo far as the Year 1618. when four Comets appeared one after another, (ſome or all of which are diſcourſed of in the Writings of the greateſt Aſtrologers of that time) we can with eaſe remember the years 1664. and 1665. both which are memorable for the dreadfull appearances in each of them, but they are the rather to be mentioned by me now, becauſe they are moſt ſignal Inſtances of the *Direfull Events* which inſue Comets, if ſuch a Peſtilence and Fire as preſently after

after happened may be ſtyled ſo. Afterwards, in the Year 167$\frac{2}{3}$, we were viſited with another Comet, and again, in 1680; and lately, in this preſent Year 1682. Theſe in ſo ſhort a time, in leſs than the ſpace of Eighteen Years, are very Notable. If I prove that theſe Strange Lights are *Boding*, (which I am haſtning to) I cannot ſee but that we ſhall be very much concerned.

I might add one word of the *Time*, which is another Apendage or Circumſtance of the Doctrine of Comets. It hath been obſerved that they appear indifferently at all Times of the Year, the Spring and Fall, Summer and Winter, as is evident from the Tables of Comets which are extant, which agrees with that of *Seneca*, *Non magìs certum eſt illis* (i.e. *Cometis*) *Tempus quo appareant, quàm Locus ullus ultra quem non exeant.* cap. 12. But the *Autumn generally* is the time of

of their appearing, ſay the moſt Aſtronomers: but if you demand a Reaſon to be rendred of it, it will be impoſſible to offer one that is ſatisfactory, eſpecially if Comets be acknowledged (as they have been for a conſiderable time) to be ſituated above the Moon, and even among the higheſt Planets; for earthly Exhalations cannot mount in a ſhort time to ſo high a place. So that it is in vain to enquire into the *Reaſon* of the *Time*, as well as *other circumſtances*, of their Appearance.

I could ſay ſomething alſo of the *Colour* of Comets, for Hiſtory is full of Variety here, repreſenting ſome as pale and wan, others as darkiſh and cloudy: ſome as golden or yellow, others, as ſilver like, bright, clear, and ſo tranſparent that Stars have been plainly ſeen through them: ſome of a ruddy complexion, and bloudy, and fiery,

others of a leaden and livid hue, all differing according to the mixture of more or leſs Light.

Laſtly, the *Smell* as well as Colour of Comets hath been taken notice of; and this hath happened onely then when they have hung hovering near the Earth; an Inſtance whereof Hiſtorians give us in that Comet which was ſeen *A. D.* 396. in which they acquaint us that a ſtrong and Sulphureous Smell was felt.

And thus I have, in purſuance of the firſt Task I ſet my ſelf, enquired into the *Nature* of theſe Heavenly Bodies: I have particularly conſidered their Origine, Make, Figure, Situation, Motion, and the reſt of the Phænomena appertaing to them. And I may with confidence aver in the cloſe of all, that he who ſees not how difficult, if not impoſſible, it is to unriddle the Nature of Comets, ſees nothing

nothing in Philoſophy and the Nature of Things.

What contrary Accounts do Philoſopher give of them?

Thoſe that will not wholly grant the Efficacy and Operation of Comets, muſt, whether they will or no, confeſs their Influence in *This*, that they have cauſed grievous Wars and Feuds among Aſtronomers, who (we ſee) are engaged with great vigour againſt one another, and in the concluſion purchaſe nothing but Obſcurity and Uncertainty. The variety of their Opinions, and the interfering of ſome of them with Themſelves, undeniably prove to us, that the things they ſearch into are rather to be admired than explained.

I think I have at one time or other read a good round company of Authours that treat of Comets, and I could never yet find

that the moſt knowing and judicious among them are confident and peremptory in the aſſerting of their Hypotheſis about them: no, they unanimouſly acknowledge their Ignorance and Shallowneſs, they own themſelves to be non-pluſs'd, and have no other Eſteem and Apprehenſion of theſe ſtrange Sights than of things moſt wonderfull and aſtoniſhing.

Senec. *Nat. Quæſt. l.* 7. *c.* 1. One of the greateſt Natural (as well as Moral) Philoſophers that ever the World bred, ſpeaketh in the beginning of his Book of Comets after this manner concerning his intended Diſpoſition of Comets: *Quæ an vera ſint Dii ſciunt, quibus eſt ſcientia veri. Nobis rimari illa & conjecturare in Occulto tantùm licet.* He pretends not to Science, but contents himſelf with bare gueſſing. And (in the ſame book) he gives this Reaſon of it, *Quàm multa præter Hos* (i.e. *Cometas*) *per ſecretum eunt, nunquam humanis oculis*

Cap. 30.

oculis orientia? Neq; enim omnia Deus humanis oculis nota fecit Quota pars operis tanti noſtris oculis committitur? The great Governour of the World hath thought fit to hide many things from us, and amongſt them the Account of theſe Phænomena is one. More particularly he ingenuouſly confeſſes, that that of the Tail or Buſh muſt be attributed to the *Nature of Comets*, (ſo he expreſſes it,) and (as he explains himſelf) *to cauſes which are occult to us.* Cap. 27.

Though others have thought they have been able to ſolve theſe Phænomena, yet our great Philoſopher was not aſhamed to confeſs his Inability, and therefore he choſe to reſolve them into ſome ſecret Virtue and wonderfull Power; which alſo made him ſtyle a Comet *Novum è cælo Miraculum. Tycho Brahe*, allied to the chief Nobility of *Denmark*, but more related to generous Truth, ſpeaks thus, *Cum* Tychon. *Progymnaſm. tom. 1.*

iis non invitè ſentio qui Cometas intra Naturæ ſecreta nondum explanata reponunt, eóſq; ex occultis cauſis provenire aſſeverant. Comets are rightly ranked in the number of thoſe ſecrets of Nature which are kept cloſe to this very day, and it is very rational to believe, that they are the Products of hidden Cauſes. Both this excellent Aſtromer, and another clebrated Mathematician, whom *Germany* boaſts of, frankly acknowledge the ſhallow notices they have of theſe Bodies, and, like true Philoſophers and Chriſtians, confeſs, that the wonderfull Works of God ſurpaſs Man's profoundeſt Knowledge.

Regiomontanus.

And hear the faint words of that admirable Aſtrologer, who is ſo famous for his ſeveral learned Treatiſes, *Quia quantum volo non poſſum, liceat ergo quantum poſſum præſtare*; Since I cannot, by reaſon of the difficulty of the performance, make what Diſcoveries I would about

Kepler *Optic. Aſtron.*

about the nature of Comets, I will ſally out as far as I am able, though I know (alas) my Attempts will be very Feeble and Imperfect, where the Subject I treat of is ſo lofty and arduous.

What ſaith that Modern Meteorologiſt? *Ego Cometas in maximis & abditiſſimis Naturæ Miraculis pono:* If any one would know (ſaith he) what account I make of Comets, I declare, that I rank them among the greateſt and moſt hidden Miracles of Nature. And after he had been rendring a Reaſon of the Tails of Comets, and refuting other mens Opinions, he complaineth that he remains unſatisfied, and that ſuch Lank Accounts would rather ſtarve than ſatiate an inquiſitive Mind, *Hæc tamen non omnino mihi mentem implent, ſed abeundum tamen jam eſt vel ſemifamelico.* And ſpeaking there of other Phænomena of the Beard or Tail, he concludes at laſt moſt devoutly

Fromondus. *Meteorolog.* l. 3. c. 4.

and ingeniouſly in theſe words, *Sed quàm neq; hoc, neq; quicquid aliud proſpicio, mihi intellectum in tranquillo ponit! Ite nunc, mortales, & acie illâ Divina rimamini & penetrate, quam unius etiam Cometæ barba vobis hebetat & obtundit.* Neither this Hypotheſis, nor any other, that I ever met with, yields me ſatisfaction. How then can ye, fond Wretches, pretend to ſearch, and even *pierce* into *Divine Myſteries* with that ſorry Wit of yours, which you ſee *one Hair* of a Comet is able to *blunt* and *turn the edg of?* And ſo he goes on to confeſs and bewail the defects of Philoſophy and our Underſtandings.

Franc Reſta *Meteor. l.* 1. *c.* 6.

Another Writer, on the ſame Subject, talks after this rate, *Hæc quidem poſſibilia ſunt, ſed non niſi Divinando determinari poſſit qualiter de facto res ſe habeat:* Perhaps this way of explaining the Nature of Comets is not altogether impoſſible, but in my mind there is no man

man can directly tell us how things really are, unleſs he had the Art of Divining.

A late Aſtronomer, in imitation of the Great Men before cited, reckons Comets *inter Arcana mundi, & abditiſſima naturæ Miracula:* and in the ſame place he makes bold (and yet with a great ſhare of Modeſty) to ſay, that God propounds this *Splendidum Ænigma nunquam ſolvendum:* he puts this Riddle to the World which no Philoſophy will be ever able to explain. This ſubtile Jeſuite, who had ſet down and examined whatever others had writ concerning the Production of a Comets Train, and its turing it ſelf conſtantly from the Sun, as if he deſpaired of ſolving the difficulty in a Philoſophical way, at length betakes himſelf to this Freak, *viz.* that the Face of the Comet is turned towards the Sun like an Heliotrope, or as one Face of the Loadſtone turns it ſelf to one

Ricciol. Almageſt. *Tom.* 1. *pars poſter.*

Ricciol. *Tom.* 1. *de Cometis.*

one of the Poles. Would not one imagine that he might as well have ſaid, to ſolve all, that the Head of the Comet had Brains, and knew when it was to Face about?

Franciſc. Fernandez.

There is *Another* who refers the buſineſs to a ſecret Antipathy between the Rays of the Sun, and thoſe of a Comet, inſomuch that theſe latter are, as it were, afraid of the former, and conſequently flie away from them. But the Jeſuite grows more ſober afterwards, and finding, after all his exquiſitive Searches, that the Doctrine of Comets was obſcure and unaccountable, at laſt he aſcribes the Make and whole *Regimen* of them to God, or ſome Intelligences; and in the cloſe of his Learned Tractate of Comets he ends thus, *In re adeò incerta liceat tandem nobis ex hoc Labyrintho ſi non exire, at certè evolare.* It is impoſſible (ſaith he) in ſuch a perplexed Maze as this, to find my way out fairly and orderly;

Tom. 1. *pars poſter.*

derly; and therefore I haſten to get out how I can.

You hear in what humble and deſpairing Language they utter themſelves. And it is certain, that the Perſons who ſpeak after this manner had great Inſight into Philoſophy, and were the chief Favourites and Confidents of Nature. It had been an eaſie thing for them to have pitched upon an Hypotheſis, and gone through with it againſt all Oppoſers; and they had Credit and Authority enough to back what they had a mind to avow. This was not the courſe they took, but they ſuſpended their Judgments, and nothing but mighty Diſſatisfaction and Amazement appear in their Writings; and inſtead of being poſitive and decretory, they confeſſed themſelves Silenced and Puzzled. Theſe great Dictators in Philoſophy would not be found in this odd poſture, if the matter of their diſquiſition were not ſome-

thing

thing Extraordinary and Wonderfull, nay, if every thing in theſe Bodies were not Rare and Aſtoniſhing: which is a demonſtration that they were ſet up in the Heavens on purpoſe to call our Eyes to them, that they were deſignedly placed there to create Wonder, and to be taken notice of, and that they are the Amazing Finger of God to the World.

But though the wiſeſt and ſubtileſt Heads were backward in giving an Account of the Natural Philoſophy of Comets, yet (as you ſhall be convinced afterwards) they are plain and peremptory in delivering their Opinions concerning the *Effects*, *Ends* and *Events* of them, the conſideration of *which* is my next, and indeed my Main Buſineſs.

Having then diſpatch'd our Enquiry into the Matter, Figure, and other Properties of Comets, I am

to

to ſhew you in the *Second Place*, that they carry in them the true Nature of *Cauſes* and *Signs*, or (as others are pleaſed to word it) of *Operative* and *Indicative Signs*. Some have ſtifly denied both theſe, but I doubt not but I ſhall make it evident to any Conſiderative Man, that they lie under a great Miſtake.

I aſſert then that Comets ſignifie both *Naturally* and *Arbitrarily*, that is, in *Themſelves*, and likewiſe *by Divine Inſtitution*. Whether you conſider them *Phyſically* or *Theologically*, they are certain Indications and Signs of future Evils.

To prove them to be *Cauſes* or *Operative Signs* I will treat of them firſt *Phyſically*, and here I will offer to you theſe two things;

1. That they have a Connexion with the Nature of the things produced.

2. That

2. That they are plain Repreſentations and Reſemblances of the things ſignified, as Signs ought to be.

Firſt, I ſay, They have ſome Agreement and Connexion with the Nature of thoſe things of which they are ſaid to be Omens. And it is neceſſary that this be cleared unleſs we will ſtep directly into Magick and Divination. The things which lead us to the knowledge of future Events muſt have a Natural Connexion with the things they are ſaid to point at, or elſe they may juſtly be reckoned to be vain and Fantaſtick: as *Tully* excellently proves the vanity of the Gentile Divination from this, that thoſe means which they uſed, as the Bowels of Animals, the Chattering of Birds, and the like, had no cognation and alliance with the fortuitous things, the knowledge and foreſight of which they pretended was acquired by

by them. He ſhews that there is not any Conſent or Sympathy between theſe things, and thence concludes they are Cheats and Impoſtors. And ſo here, it may be juſtly asked, Are future Evils produced by Comets as by their proper Cauſes? What certain Connexion is there between thoſe Calamities and theſe Apparitions, ſo as that we ſhould be able to gather from theſe, that ſuch effects will aſſuredly follow? We are certain that the Philoſophers of old thought there was ſome Affinity between them, and that Comets were both *Signs* and *Cauſes*. It is vouched by them once and again, that great and vehement Winds, and exceſſive Drougth, are the Phyſical Effects of theſe Appearances. Σημαίνουσι γινόμενοι πλείους πνεύματα καὶ αὐχμούς, if they appear often, they portend Winds and Drougth. And immemediately after, Ὅταν μὲν πυκνοὶ καὶ πλείους φαίνονται, ξηροὶ καὶ πνευματώδεις Ariſtot. *Meteor. l.* 1. *c.* 9.

ματώδεις γίγνονται οἱ ἐνιαυτοὶ ἐπιδήλως, if they be frequently seen, the years are remarkably Dry and Tempestuous. Our Philosopher in his Natural Questions is of this persuasion, and observeth, that after Comets (and he gives particular Instances) great and continued Tempests (accompanied with Earthquakes) followed, as the Natural Effects of them. And not onely the *Ancient*, but *Modern* Sages aver the same. Thus the Learned *Kepler*, (*lib. de Cometis*) and *Cardan* (*lib. de rerum varietate*, *l.* 1. *c.* 1.) prove the *Natural Effects* of Comets, and the latter of these is not confuted by his acute Opposer, (*Scalig. Exercit.* 79. &c.) According to these it is no uneasie thing to make it evident, how by the extraordinary and hurtfull Heat which is produced by a Comet, both when it is in Sight, and after its Extinction, several other Evils are caused in a Natural way. From the Air and Earth

Lib. 2. 7. *c.* 28.

Earth being infected, how eaſie a conſequence is there of Barrenneſs and unfruitfull Seaſons! If it once be admitted that Comets diſtemper and inflame the Air, and exhauſt the *Succus* of the Earth, it will neceſſarily follow, that a barren Soil, and the corrupting and blaſting of the fruits, muſt be the Products of them: And from theſe will naturally enſue Dearth, Scarcity and Famine. And, as the inevitable Effect of both, we muſt expect Sickneſs, Diſeaſes, Mortality, and more eſpecially the ſudden Death of many Great Ones, becauſe theſe are ſooner and more eaſily hurt than others, for their delicate Feeding, and Luxurious courſe of Life, and ſometimes their great Cares and Watchings, which weaken and infeeble their Bodies, render them more obnoxious than the vulgar ſort of People. Hence it is that Comets may deſervedly be ſaid to preſage the Death of mighty Mo-

narchs and Princes, to be Funeral Torches to light Kings to their Tombs. And becauſe by their noxious and infectious Irradiations, Mens Bloud is apt to be heightned into Fevers and Calentures, and all malignant Diſtempers, and even into the moſt contagious Diſeaſes, the Conſequence of a Raging Peſtilence from a Comet is very eaſie and natural, if not almoſt neceſſary. Thus it is plain, that the greateſt and moſt dreaded Calamities have a Dependence on theſe Prodigies, and are the Real and Phyſical Effects of them.

And whereas it is Objected, That the Effects of Comets (as they are preſented to us by thoſe that treat of them) are contrary to one another, this is ſoon anſwered; for that there ſhould be *Contrary Effects* from the *ſame Cauſe* is no unuſual thing in Philoſophy; wherefore *great Inundations* likewiſe (no leſs than *Drought*) may be the Product of

of theſe Cauſes; for that intemperate Weather which the Flames of Comets beget, cauſeth an extraordinary heap of Vapours and Exhalations to be drawn up, which form themſelves Naturally into Clouds, and thoſe Clouds in a ſhort time muſt needs fall down in exceſſive Showres and immoderate Rains. And it might be ſhewed alſo that great calms, as well as Storms and Tempeſts, Cold and Froſt, no leſs than extreme Heat, may be the Effects, *i.e.* ſecondary Effects of the ſame Cauſe.

Moreover, It is no hard Enterprize to ſhew how Comets are the Cauſes of *Civil* and *Political*, as well as *Natural Events*. For from what hath been ſaid before, *viz.* that they portend the Death of Princes, it follows, that they probably Bode great Changes and Viciſſitudes in Kingdoms, in reference to Religion and other Matters; for Hiſtory abundantly in-

forms us, that theſe are oftentimes the Conſequences of a new Prince's ſucceeding in the Throne.

Beſides, from the inflamed Spirits of Men, cauſed by a diſtempered Air, Wars and Tumults, Broils and Seditions naturally proceed. So that Comets have been the Cauſes and Forerunners, not onely of great Storms and Concuſſions in the Air, but of Turbulent and Tempeſtuous Seaſons in the State, of Confuſion, Maſſacres, Slaughter, Bloudſhed, and Miſchiefs of all Dimenſions, both at home and from foreign Quarters. Theſe have been thought, by men of ſober Philoſophy, to have been the ſignifications and Preſages of Comets. I will ſum up all their Dire Effects in theſe plain Verſes which I lately met with:

Dira Cometarum proles peſtiſq; faméſque,
Seditio, regum fœdera, vincla, neçes.

Exci-

Excidium patriæ, ventorum prælia, morbi
Insoliti, cædes, funera, nulla fides.
Dissidium nubis, tremulæ telluris hiatus,
Fulgetra cum tonitru, fulmineæq; faces.
Æstates siccæ, aut nimio mox imbre madentes,
Externo infuso milite vastus ager.
Dira locustarum volucrúmq; examina, regum
Translata hostili sceptra videnda loco.
Abducti ex patria populi, civilia bella,
Diluvia, & pecorum non abolenda lues.

When once a direfull Comet spreads its Train,
Contagious Deaths, and pining Famine reign.

Monarchs make Leagues to render
Empire ſure,
Sedition now keeps Gaols and Deaths
in ure.
Countreys are Sack'd, impetuous
Storms ariſe,
And Bodies feel unheard-of Mala-
dies:
Slaughter grows bold, Faith ſeeing
this expires;
The heated Clouds diſcloſe their in-
bred Fires,
And now by Sympathy in Thunder
groan,
Th' Earth Quakes and Trembles at
the diſmall Tone.
Heaven mourns in ſcorching droughts,
and then again
Deſpairing weeps in laviſh ſhowres
of Rain.
A foreign Foe in glittering Arms ap-
pears,
And dries up the poor Remnant of
our Tears.

The

The Airy Region then displays its Hoſt
Of ſcarce-known Fowls which hover o'er the Coaſt.
See next how Sceptres here and there are hurl'd,
And Regal Globes are toſt about the World.
Some are led Captive to a Foreign Strand,
Whilſt Wars at home afflict their Native Land.
Great Deluges come next: and 'cauſe the Fate
Is Univerſal from a Comet's Date,
Not onely Men but Beaſts muſt in it ſhare:
Hence Rot and Murrain are the Cattels fare.

Such Effects as theſe may be expected from thoſe Cauſes; and I do not ſee why they may not be called *Phyſical Events*, ſince they proceed from thoſe as from Natural Cauſes and Agents. Nor doth the eminently

nently knowing *Kepler* diſſent from this, though (when he ſpeaks of the Comets that appeared in the Years 1607, and 1618.) he holds they are the *Cauſes* of Diſorders and Calamities here below, by a certain kind of *Sympathy* which the Sublunary Elements have with the Heavenly Bodies: for notwithſtanding his expreſſing himſelf after that manner, he means no other than what *Ariſtotle*, *Ptolemy*, *Cardan*, and others, did, *viz.* That there is a Natural Connexion between Comets and thoſe Evils which are ſeen to enſue them, though it muſt be granted that theſe Portentous Sights are not *Neceſſary Cauſes*, *i. e.* Thoſe Diſmall Effects do not *certainly* and *infallibly* follow them: one is not *neceſſarily* and *always* the Product of the other, (of which more hereafter.)

But that which I ſay, and I think I have proved, is this, that they are commonly chained together like Natu-

Natural Cauſes and Effects, and that the Natural Power of thoſe Cauſes is able to produce, and generally doth actually produce ſuch Effects; and this is enough to prove them to be *True Cauſes.*

Secondly, They are (as Signs ought to be) *Plain Repreſentations* of the things ſignified. We may learn from the very *Make* of Comets what they are *deſigned for.* Their *Figure* is repreſentative of that which is meant by them. Sometimes they diſplay themſelves in the ſhape of *Beſoms*, as if they taught us by that homely Embleme, what we ought to doe, *viz.* to remove our Defilements and Pollutions, not to ſay, as if they were ſent to tell a Nation that they ſhall be *ſwept away* and deſtroyed for their Sins. How often (without any help of Fancy) doth this prodigious Light appear in the likeneſs and proportions of a *Rod*, to acquaint us that

it

it was designed to correct and discipline a froward People, and that we ought to submit to it's Pedagogy? When we see it at another time representing it self like a *Torch* or *Flambeau*, how can we think otherwise than that it is sent to give more *Light* to the dark World, or if it despise that, to shew that it deserveth to be *burnt up*? I know that all this will pass with some for mere moral Reflexions or divine Fancies. It will be said that some devout Fools will make things to be like any thing they please. But then I desire to know whether the old Pagan Philosophers were a sort of Religious Fools, whether *Seneca* and *Pliny* (whom I have often brought on the Stage,) especially the latter of them, whose Writings let us understand he was one of *Those Fools who say in their Heart there is no God*, whether These, and all the profound Astronomers who have writ of the Figures of Comets, and did it not to exercise

Λαμπάδας.

eiſe their Fancies, but to diſplay their Judgments, whether Theſe, I ſay, were Religious and Fanciſull Fools? Untill this be Anſwered I proceed.

Who knows not that theſe ſtrange Flames appear moſt commonly in the ſhape of Military Weapons, and Inſtruments of War and Bloud? You may ſee one appear like a *Dart* or *Arrow*; another like a *Lance* or *Speare*; a third bowed like a Warlike *Horn* or *Trumpet*; as it were to ſound an Allarm from Heaven; a fourth in the figure of a *Sword*, a known Weapon of Bloud and Slaughter. The Head of *This Laſt* repreſents the Hilt, and the Traine the Blade of the Sword, which ſometimes is ſtreight, and ſometimes like a Falchion. Several of this ſort have been ſeen in the World. It is very probable that *That* at the beginning of things, I mean that *Flaming Sword which turned every ways* at the entrance of

Ἀκοντίας. Λογχίτης. Κερατίας. Ξιφίας, & Enſiformis. Gen. 3. 24.

of *Paradiſe*, belonged to this *Species*. Indeed this could not have been better expreſſed than by the Original לַהַט הַמִּתְהַפֶּכֶת, and by the Verſion of the *Seventy* φλογὸς ῥομφαίας; eſpecially with the addition of the Adjective הַמִּתְהַפֶּכֶת *anceps*, *bipennis*, two-edged, repreſenting a Sword which cutteth both ways, *i. e.* Both the ſides of that Comet's Tail were alike, and of equal ſtake: And whereas the Text ſaith that *Cherubins were placed at the entrance of Paradiſe*, it lets us underſtand that Angels were particularly Adminiſtring in ſhewing this extraordinary Prodigy, and perhaps for this Reaſon among others theſe Miniſtring Spirits are called a *Flaming Fire*, Pſal. 104. 4. This Comet (as it is the Nature of them) produced Barrenneſs; the Earth (according to the Curſe) brought forth Thorns and Thiſtles. This likewiſe preſaged all the *other* ſad and deplorable Effects of our firſt Parents

Parents Expulſion out of *Paradiſe*. Such a Sword-Comet appeared in the Year of our Lord 70, or 71, being the firſt Year of the Emperour *Veſpaſian*. It hung over *Jeruſalem* a whole Year before it was Taken and Sack'd by *Titus*, as one who was an Eye-witneſs of it aſſures us. Joſeph. *de Bell. Judaic. l.* 6. *c.* 31.

But leſt that ſhould be thought to be God's peculiar and ſingular Enſign, and not to be parallel'd, or to be made uſe of in the preſent Caſe, (as ſome will not permit us to alledge this Inſtance of *Jeruſalem*'s Comet,) I will produce ſome others, and the moſt remarkable I have read of are theſe which follow:

A terrible *Xiphias*, or Sword-Comet, appeared when the Civil War between *Octavius* and *Mark Antony* began, which was 42 years before Chriſt's Birth. Another of the like Figure ſhewed it ſelf *A. D.* 383. or (as others) 392. in the Reign of *Theodoſius*: This appeared Nicephor. *Eccleſ. hiſt. l.* 12. *c.* 37.

red 40 days, and was a little before *Valentinian* was ſlain, and *Eugenius* invaded the Weſtern Empire. Such another Flaming Sword was ſeen over the City of *Conſtantinople*, about the Year of our Lord 400. This ξιφοειδὴς ἀστὴρ (as the Hiſtorian calls it) was ſo great, that it reached from the Horizon to the Zenith. *Nicephor. Eccl. Hiſt. l.* 13. *c.* 5. and of this likewiſe ſpeak other Hiſtorians. This happened when the ſo much dreaded *Gainas*, the Barbarous and Tyrannical Commander of the *Gothes*, brought the Gothiſh Army into *Thrace*, and miſerably waſted the greateſt part of *Greece*, and was about to encompaſs *Conſtantinople*, and take it. An *Enſiformis*, but of a leſſer ſize, appeared 30 days in the Year 632, or 633. before *Perſia* was taken by the *Saracens*. Theſe were no *Fantaſtick ſhapes*, ſuch as the feigned Images and Iconiſms of the Conſtellations of the Dog and Bear, *&c.*

Socrates *Eccl. Hiſt. l.* 7. *c.* 6. Sozomen *l.* 8. *c.* 4.

Funccius Spondanus

but

but they were *Real* and *Subſtantial*, and no man need nouriſh any laviſh Fancy to make out theſe Shapes and Reſemblances; from which we may certainly infer that they are *truly Significant* and *Preſaging*. I muſt confeſs that *Gaffarel* (in his Book of Curioſities) and *Cornelius Gemma* (*de Nat. Charact. divin.*) are too Fantaſtical in their interpreting the Figures of Comets, and too punctual in determining the effects from ſuch Likeneſſes and Shapes. But, as I am no Slave of theſe Coſmocriticks, ſo I muſt needs profeſs that it is irrational and impious to diſregard the Finger of God in the peculiar ſhape of ſome Comets, becauſe ſome idle Writers have indulged their Fancy and Humour, and have ſhewed themſelves conceited in the account they give of the Figures of Comets.

Thus far I have conſidered theſe Heavenly Bodies *Naturally*, and as they are *in themſelves*: Now it remains

mains that I treat of them *Theologically*, as they are *by Divine Appointment* and *Institution* rendred *Significative*.

It is the Pleasure of the great Moderatour of all things, (and that is sufficient) that these should be set up as Signs. And *This* is acknowledged even by those who will not be brought to confess the *former*.

Damascen. de Fid. Orthod. l. 2. c. 7. Ἴσως δ' ἄν τις εἴποι ὅτι καὶ πολέμων ἐκ Αἰτια, ἀλλὰ Σημεῖα συνίσανται. The Heavenly Bodies are not constituted Causes, but Signs of Wars, saith a Religious Man. Future occurrences are discovered by these Heavenly Lamps, *Non Naturali*

Petav. Theol. Dogm. Tom. 3. l. 1. *Causarum nexu & ordine, sed Dei Nutu & Auxilio*, saith another. *Nego Cometam* (saith *Fromondus*, *Meteor. l.* 3. *c.* 3.) *calamitatum Physicam causam, non nego tamen Signum ex Institutione divina esse, quam omnium temporum Historia affirmat.* But I will make it plain, that *Both*

these

theſe are very conſiſtent, and that the conſideration of Comets in both theſe reſpects is Rational and Accountable. We may treat of them not onely as Natural Philoſophers, but as pious Men and Chriſtians. I know God ſometimes ſpeaketh to the World by Supernatural Signs, without making uſe of Second Cauſes, and even againſt the courſe and order of Nature. Theſe are *Divine Signs onely*; but now I am ſpeaking of ſuch as are *Natural Signs and Cauſes*, *i.e.* produced in a Natural way wholly or partly, and are Phyſical Cauſes of ſuch and ſuch Effects, and yet are *Divine Signs likewiſe*: For it may be worth your obſerving, that the *Same things* may be *Natural Cauſes and Effects*, and yet *Divine Tokens*. The Rainbow ſignifies the Covenant between God and Man, and therefore is ſtyled the *Token of the Covenant*, 9. Gen. 13. but withall it is a Meteor that hath a Natu-

ral Production, and the Cauſe of it is made out by Philoſophy. Fire and Brimſtone from Heaven burnt up the lewd Sinners of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, and yet when I reade in *Gen.* 14. 10. and in profane Writers, that theſe Cities were near to many Pits of Slime, and fat and pitchy Clay, I can well conceive alſo how that dreadfull Conflagration was carried on even by Natural Cauſes, how the Fire broke out of the Earth to meet that which rained from Heaven, and conſequently how the Deſtruction of thoſe places may partly be attributed to the Nature of the Soil, and the Combuſtible Matter it afforded. The Tower of *Babel* was without doubt demoliſhed by the Signal Hand of the Almighty; yet it may be true which *Joſephus* relates, and after him *Euſebius*, that that great Pile was thrown down by a Tempeſt and extraordinary force of Wind. With which agrees the *Sybil*'s Verſe,

Antiquit. l. 1. *c.* 15. *De Præp. Evang. l.* 9. *c.* 4.

——ἄνεμος

——ἄνεμοι μέγαν ὕψοθι πύρϛον Ῥίψαν.—— *Lib.3.Orac.*

In *Elias* his time the Drought which happened in *Syria* and *Judæa*, was a Calamity which is wont to be produced by Natural Cauſes, and from it Naturally followed a Famine; but both theſe were peculiar Signs of the Divine Anger, and by theſe God ſhewed his Wrath againſt the Sins of the People. The Thunder and Lightning which were procured by *Samuel* were in Harveſt Time, (1 *Sam.* 12. 16.) which is ſuppoſed to be a warm Seaſon, and therefore according to the Natural courſe of things a fit time for that ſort of Meteors; yet we know that they were deſigned to be marks of God's diſpleaſure and Anger. And the Holy Scripture informs us how at other times God hath created Awe and Terrour by them. The Jews re-

ceived their Law in Thunder and Lightning, and on other occaſions were affrighted into a remembrance of their Duty by the ſame means. The voice of Thunder rouzes ſome ſtupid Souls into the ſerious belief of a Divine Power. *Cælo Tonantem credimus Jovem.* Nothing in Nature leaves ſuch impreſſions of Fear as loud and repeated Thunderclaps. Some Emperours who were in a manner *Atheiſts*, (and notwithſtanding that (which is ſtrange) made Themſelves *Gods*) yet uſed to Tremble at this horrible Allarm from Heaven, and to confeſs a greater Power than themſelves, which is as much as to diſown their Self-Divinity. This made *Caligula* get under his Bed. And *Tiberius*, another of *Jupiter*'s Brothers and Fellow-Gods, was glad of his Chaplet of Laurel to ſecure him from Lightnings. Theſe few Inſtances above named are ſufficient to convince us, that the ſame things

Horat.

are

are not onely *Natural Cauſes or Effects*, but that they *ſignifie by God's Appointment*. And *This* may be applied to *Comets*, which as they are produced themſelves in a Natural way, *viz.* from a Collection of matter in the Heavens, though after ſome uncertain and unaccountable ſpaces of Time, ſo they produce Effects in the ſame Natural courſe: and yet God uſes them as Tokens of his Wrath, and appoints them to be *Divine Signs*, and to Bode extraordinary things to come. Which was the ſenſe of one of the Writers of the Byzantine Hiſtory. Οἱ μὲν ἐν τῷ ἀέρι φαινόμενοι κομῆται λόγῳ μὲν φυσικῷ συνίστανται, θανάτους δὲ ὅμως Βασιλέων ἢ καὶ προσώπων ὑπερφανῶν καταγγέλλουσι. The Comets (ſaith he) which are ſeen in the Air are produced in a Natural way, yet withall they proclaim the Deaths of Kings or other Illuſtrious Perſonages: And for this he quotes St. *Baſil* the great. From which it Mich. Glycas. *Annal. pars* 1.

is evident that the ſame Things may have certain and manifeſt Cauſes in Nature, and are likewiſe appointed by the Authour of Nature to preſignifie future Events, ſo that it is poſſible not onely to attain to a *Phyſical Knowledge* of them, but a kind of *Divination.* But my main buſineſs at preſent is to make good this Latter, and to prove that Comets are Signs of future Calamities *ex Inſtituto Divino*, that it is God's Will and Pleaſure they ſhould ſignifie ſuch things.

In order to this I will onely premiſe that God gives Notice beforehand by evident Tokens what he intends to doe afterwards, ſuppoſing there be no Prevention by amendment of Mens Lives. This is the meaning of the whole ſixth Chapter of the Book of the Revelation, which is an Account of the *Opening of the Seals*, and ſets before us the *Forerunners* of the *Judgments* which were to *follow.* And though

though it is preſented in the way of a *Viſion*, yet if Mens Eyes were Open it would be ſeen to be the *uſual Method* of the Moſt High in the World. Accordingly I aver, that Comets are *Warnings and Harbingers* of *God's Wrath and Diſpleaſure* againſt the Wickedneſs of Mankind, and alſo of the *Effects* of that Diſpleaſure, which are ſome enſuing calamities. They are undeniable Arguments that there is ſome great Diſorder in the World, and that things are exceedingly amiſs. They are ſignal Teſtimonies that Sin and Vice are predominant; for theſe are the onely things that provoke God to Anger. Now thoſe prodigious Appearances in the Heavens are fitted to this Purpoſe, (*viz.* of allarming us, and giving Notice of enſuing Evils) becauſe they are both *unuſual* and *affrighting*.

Firſt, As they are Rare and Unuſual, they are ſerviceable to this

purpoſe. For it happeneth, it ſeems, by the Make, or rather the perverſe Diſpoſition of Humane Nature, that what is common and frequent, and according to the ordinary courſe of things, is ſlighted by us, and thence it is neceſſary that we ſhould ſometimes be ſurprized and extraordinarily moved by Objects that are rare and uncommon.

Senec. *Nat. Quæſt.* l. 7. cap. 1. *Sol ſpectatorem niſi cum deficit non habet.— Si quid turbatum eſt, aut præter conſuetudinem emicuit, ſpectamus, interrogamus, oſtendimus. Adeò Naturale eſt magis Nova quàm Magna mirari.* It is an Eccliſpe that makes the Sun to be gazed at. If we eſpie any thing that is ſtrange and out of Order we preſently ſtare at it, we ſtart many Queries about it, we point at it, and ſhew it to others. So natural a thing is it become to admire what is Rare, rather than what is Great.

But the Appearances we are ſpeaking of are both Rare and Great, and

and therefore doubly deſerve to be taken notice of, and to be made the Subject of our deepeſt Admiration. Worthily did our Philoſopher begin his Book of Comets with thoſe excellent words, *Nemo uſque eò tardus & hebes & demiſſus in terram eſt ut ad Divina non erigatur, ac totâ mente conſurgat, utique ubi Novum aliquod è cœlo Miraculum fulſit.* He muſt be a Sot indeed, and ſunk into the very Earth who doth not lift up his Soul to God, and what is Divine and Heavenly, as ſoon as he beholds ſuch a miraculous Apparition as a Comet.

Again, Theſe great Bodies are *Affrighting*, and that on a double account.

Firſt, The *Rarity* of them (which I before ſpoke of) makes them ſo. For to what purpoſe are theſe *unuſual Spectacles* ſhewn by God to the World? To what end are theſe ſtrange

ſtrange *Shapes* ſet before us? There are innumerable Lights of Heaven of an entire round Figure which we conſtantly behold, but what mean theſe which appear but ſeldom, with fiery Scrolls or flaming Labells iſſuing from them? It is downright ſottiſhneſs to think that theſe are ſet up for vain ſhews and uſeleſs ſights. It is unworthy of Providence to defend this. But it is highly reaſonable to think that they are appointed by God to affright and terrifie the World, to denounce future Judgments, and to forewarn Men of the Wrath to come, and to let them expect the emptying of the Vials of God's Anger upon them.

Secondly, Their *Poſture* and *Figure*, (as hath been partly ſuggeſted already) render them *Terrible*. They have ſuch a Frame and Shape given them by God as is apt to ſtir up Fear and Dread. You have read in

in what Images they appear: And though I know it may be ſaid that there are other Shapes (beſides thoſe I mentioned) which are not danting and affrighting, yet, as thoſe Bodies themſelves are *Irregular* and *Monſtrous*, and of a Figure different from all the Luminaries of Heaven, they are on that ſcore *Terrible*. And you may remember that all the Phænomena belonging to Comets (of which I have given a particular Narrative) breed an unſpeakable amazement and Conſternation. Wherefore are theſe ſtrange Lights hung up ſo high in the great and ſpatious Theatre of Heaven, but that all Eyes ſhould behold them, and tremble at them? In ſhort, the Eternal Being looks angrily upon the World in the Blaze of a Comet.

If it be asked *Why* God gives Warning of future Calamities by ſuch Harbingers? I anſwer, He doth it,

1. That

1. That Men may *Expect* and *Provide* in time against those unhappy Events. And the mercifull Governour of the Universe bids us by such Monitors *Prepare* for his Judgments, either by making our selves ready to receive them with Patience and contentment, or by what wise Expedients we can to guard and defend our selves against them. Appositely whereunto saith the Byzantine Annalist, Σημεῖά τινα δίδοσι τῶν προορᾶν ἕνεκεν ἔστιν ὅτε τὰ μέλλοντα, κἀντεῦθεν ἑαυτῷ περιποιεῖσθαι ἀσφάλειαν. God indulges to men certain Signs by which they may have a Prospect of what shall be, and so by that means consult their Safety when the Storm cometh: according to that remark of the wisest Head, *A prudent man foreseeth the Evil, and hideth himself.* Or,

Mich. Glyc. *Annal. par.* 1.

Prov. 22. 3.

2. We are admonished by these Heavenly Nuncio's wholly to *Prevent*

vent and *Divert* the Evils which are Threatned. And this is to be effected by humble Prayer and Supplication, by Repentance and Turning unto God. Theſe Celeſtial Prodigies are purpoſely ſet up by the Omnipotent Creatour to fright the wicked out of their ſins. They are Admonitions to them that they ſhould not indulge their Pride, Luſt, Oppreſſion, Covetouſneſs, Profaneneſs, and that they ſhould not think becauſe of their greatneſs and Riches to goe unpuniſhed. As often as a Comet appeareth, a ſolemn Faſt and Humiliation ſhould be obſerved, Devout and Earneſt Prayers ſhould be put up, to divert the Storm from falling on our Heads, and that utter Confuſion and Deſtruction may not be our portion. Pope *Caliſtus*, above 200 Years agoe, ordered the Litany and Publick Prayers to be ſolemnly ſaid ſeveral Days together, merely upon the appearance of theſe Signs. The niceſt

Platina *in vit.* Caliſt.

niceſt Proteſtant may ſafely follow this Order, I mean, have recourſe to his Prayers upon the ſame Account. A Chriſtian Divine cannot have a better Text to preach Repentance from than a Comet. Hence he may with a becoming Warmth and Zeal invite Men to amend their ways, and to be reconciled to the Incenſed Majeſty of Heaven, and ſo to flee from the Wrath and Vengeance which otherwiſe would fall upon them. This Finger of God beckoneth from Heaven to call us thither. Theſe Signs Above are to make Us better who are Below. They are ſent for the ſake of the *Good*, even the *Wiſe Virgins*, who are ſometimes inclined to Slumber, and to be forgetfull of their Duty: for the ſake likewiſe of the *Worſt* and moſt ſecure Sinners, who run greedily into all exceſs of Riot, and refuſe to be reclaimed by the uſual means which are afforded them. Such

Wretches

Wretches may haply be ſtartled out of their Security, and have their Eyes opened by theſe unuſual and ſtrange Flaſhings of Fire from above; theſe Flames from Heaven may be ſerviceable to keep them out of Hell.

If this ſounds like popular Preaching, and be counted Pulpit-Harangue, I will be content to ſit down a while; and let us hear what kind of Doctrine a Lay-Aſtronomer (and he one of the moſt accompliſhed and judicious that this latter Age can boaſt of) will deliver on this Subject. Thus he Preacheth on the Comet that appeared in the Year 1607. *Affirmo Cometam hunc à Deo inter ſidera exhibitum, ut eſſet Teſtimonium univerſis & ſingulis mortalitatis ſuæ, utq; admoneantur decretum eſſe Deo brevi bonam generis humani partem promiſcuæ conditionis, quacunque fati lege, ex hoc mundo transferre.—— Monere itaq; Cœleſtem Præconem ut pro*

Kepler De *Phyſiologia Cometarum, l.* 3. *p.* 3.

pro ſe Deo quilibet reconcilietur, migrationi ſe paret. The ſum of this Great Man's Aſtrological Theology is this, That the Appearance of Comets, thoſe Celeſtial Heralds and Criers, is for ſuch weighty purpoſes as theſe; namely, To remind men effectually of their Mortality and unſetled duration of Life, to acquaint them that it is the deſign of Heaven in a ſhort time to ſnatch the preſent Inhabitants out of this World, and to tranſlate them to another: and therefore that all ranks and conditions of men are concerned to fit themſelves for their Departure, and to make their Peace with God before they go hence. What an Admirable Funeral Diſcourſe doth this Chriſtian Aſtronomer make on a Comet! Let us hear another Sermon on the ſame Text, a Text which I have already, and ſhall yet farther prove to be the *Word* and *Voice of God.* Thus then I will giveyou in Engliſh the ſenſe of

of what you may reade in another Language of that Modern Glory of Mathematicks, Comets (ſaith he) are ordained by Divine Providence, that we ſhould lift up our Eyes to Heaven, and admire God in his viſible Tokens there, that we may be invited to a Dread and Reverence of the Divine Majeſty, by beholding ſuch wonderfull and unuſual Signs, that we may daily expect ſome great thing in our own and other Countreys, and provide for ſuch Tidings; that we may, by the Fear and Awe of God wrought in us, betake our ſelves ſpeedily to Repentance and a holy Life: and laſtly, that hence we might have ſome Repreſentation and Specimen (as it were) of the Sign of the Son of Man, and of thoſe terrible wonders in Heaven and Earth, which ſhall precede the Coming of Chriſt to Judgment. Lo! what excellent Divinity a Comet affords! How devoutly do theſe Sons of *Urania* diſcourſe!

Bapt. Ricciol. Almageſt. *Nov. Tom.* 1. *par. poſter. l.* 8.

diſcourſe! But you do not hear them talk thus of the Sun, Moon and Stars, the ordinary and leiger Luminaries of Heaven. No: They know there is a vaſt difference between Them and the other extraordinary Heralds that make their Appearance to us. *Theſe* are made for other uſes and purpoſes, and as they are fatal in themſelves, and in their own Nature, ſo they are ſigns ſet up by God *ex Inſtituto*, to foretoken future Evils.

But how can we certainly know that Comets are Appointed for ſuch purpoſes? If they are Divine Signs, where hath God told us ſo?

I anſwer, God ſpeaks to and inſtructs Mankind not onely by his written Laws, the Sacred Scriptures, but by the Dictates of Reaſon, by the courſe of Nature, and by Acts of Providence. God ſpeaks by *Theſe* as well as by his *Word*. Theſe are plain Intimations of his Mind, and hereby he is uſed to diſcover

cover to us what he would have us doe or forbear. I may know God's Will and Pleasure by the Order and Frame of things which he hath constituted in the World, and by the frequent Results and Consequences of them.

From the Consideration that Comets are of a Peculiar Make and Figure, and in all respects different from the other Heavenly Bodies, and also from the General and Perpetual Observation that they prove Fatal to Countries and Kingdoms, (as *Kepler*, and several other eminent persons have observed, and particularly set down the publick Miseries and Calamities which have insued in divers Nations soon after the appearing of Comets: and the History of all Ages hath given abundant proof of it) from these Considerations I am sufficiently Authorized to look upon them as God's Hand. I am forced by this to take notice of the Divine Pleasure and design in them.

But if any one ſhall ſtill urge the Queſtion, and ask me, Where are we told that theſe Comets and Prodigies are Divine Signs?

I Anſwer, We are told ſo directly in the Infallible and Holy Book, by one who was an accurate Obſerver of the Works of God; *Thou haſt given* (ſaith he) *a Banner* (or) *a Sign, a Token unto them that fear thee,* Pſal. 60. 4. Thou, O God, who are merciſull to all Mankind, but in a ſpecial manner to thoſe who fear and ſerve thee, art pleaſed to give warning of approaching Evils, and as it were to hold up a *Signal,* that thy Servants may be admoniſhed to avoid the impendent Danger, even when hardned ſinners are overtaken and cruſhed with it. Such a Banner was that which appeared to *Conſtantine* the Great, preſaging, as Victory to his Army, ſo Confuſion to that of his Enemies. Such a *Signal* and *Token* is every *Bearded Light* that ſheweth it ſelf in

Signum, Syr. Arab. Caſtal. Σημείωσιν, Seventy Interp. *Significationem, Vulg. Lat.*

in the Heavens, though 'tis difficult to bring ſome prejudiced minds to believe it.

I anſwer again, that the Scripture expreſly abetts this Doctrine in the 28th of *Deuteronomy*, where *Moſes*, or rather God, threatens the People, that if they will not obſerve to doe all his Commandments, all theſe Curſes ſhall come upon them, *viz.* Scarcity, Famine, Drought, Peſtilence, Sword, Blaſting, *&c.* Now theſe Calamities are the ſigns of God's Wrath, for they are denounced and threatned here as ſuch: whence it undeniably follows that the *Cauſes* and *Procurers* of them, which I have proved Comets to be, are no leſs the Signs and Marks of the Divine Diſpleaſure; for no rational Man can deny, that the Cauſe here muſt be of the ſame nature with the Effect: So then *theſe Menaces and Threatnings* in Scripture prove *thoſe Appearances* to be *Significative*, and that they are ap-

pointed by God to portend evil Tidings to the World.

You ſee then what it is I defend, *viz.* That Comets are *Signs* of approaching Calamities, and *Monitors* of God's Anger to Mankind. If upon ſome difficulties which might be alledged, I ſhould be induced to wave the one, yet I perſuade my ſelf the other is impregnable: But I have proved both, eſpecially the latter, which I moſt inſiſt upon. And I may lawfully, without being over-bold, conclude from the Premiſſes, that theſe extraordinary Lamps of Heaven are preſages of future Evil, and that God hath inſtituted and impowered them for that end.

I have now diſpatched my *Second Task*, and in that I have *partly* prevented my ſelf as to the *Third* which I propounded, which was to ſhew what abundant Suffrage my Aſſertion hath from all ranks of Writers. But now I will *purpoſely* purſue

purſue that Undertaking, and I will be the ſhorter in it becauſe I have done ſo much towards it already.

That it may appear then that I maintain no Paradox, and that I dote not on an Opinion by my ſelf, I will let you ſee that what I have offered concerning the Preſages and dreadfull Effects of Comets, is the Senſe of the Wiſe and Judicious; and if Authority be an Argument, we muſt needs cloſe with the ſide I have taken. Let the *Poets* ſtand forth firſt, who were the Earlieſt Philoſophers, Naturaliſts, Aſtronomers, nay, the firſt Divines, and therefore Competent Judges in the Caſe.

The Prince of Poets (and therefore I will begin with him) enumerating the ſeveral Prodigies which foreſignified the Death of *Julius Cæſar*, and the Civil Wars which afterwards followed, makes this Remark among the reſt,

Virgil. Georg. 1. ——*Nec diri toties arſere Cometæ.*

Never ſo many curſed Lights
Were ſeen before to plague the nights.

And in another Book,

——*Cometæ*
Æneid. 10. *Sanguinei lugubrè rubent.*——

Theſe Comets bluſh in Gore to think
What Deluges of Bloud they drink.

Marcus Manilius, an Ancient Poetick Aſtrologer who lived in *Cæſar Auguſtus* his days, and dedicated his Books of Aſtronomy to him, relates the diſmal Effects of Comets in the cloſe of the Firſt Book of his excellent Poem,

Manil. Aſtronom. l. 1. *Nunquam futilibus excanduit Ignibus æther.*

With Lights of ſuch a fiery train
The Heavens never burnt in vain.

And

And then he proceeds to particularize the horrid Effects of them,

Squalidáq; eluſi deplorant arva coloni
Et ſteriles, &c.———

And afterwards,

Quin & bella canunt Ignes, ſubitóſq; Tumultus,
Et clandeſtinis ſurgentia fraudibus Arma.

It would be too tedious an Employment to tranſcribe all, or to tranſlate any thing in that place.

The affrighting and fatal nature of Comets is excellently deciphered by *Silius Italicus* (who flouriſhed in *Veſpatian*'s time) in theſe words, though he brings them in by way of *Compariſon*,

Crine ut flammifero terret fera regna Cometes Silius, *l.* 1. *Punic.*

Sangui-

Sanguineum ſpargens Iguem, vomit atra rubentes
Fax cœlo radios, & ſævâ Luce coruſcum
Scintillat ſidus, terríſq; extrema minatur.

As when a Comet with its flaming Beard
Appears, at which the fierceſt Realms are ſcar'd,
Scattring abroad its bloudy Fire, and ſoon
The Heavenly Torch being more diſmal grown
Vomits out deeper-coloured Flakes, and then,
Having Diſgorged thus, clears up again,
And ſhines with Brisker but more cruel Light,
Threatning the World with Death and its laſt night.

Though I know ſome will have this ſpoken of Three ſeveral ſorts of

of Appearances, and they hold that a Comet cannot be ſaid *Scintillare* (as fixed Stars do,) according to that of *Cornelius Gemma, Nullus Cometarum unquam viſus eſt Scintillante lumine viſum ferire, ſed triſtis ſemper & lugubris tranquillo effluvio.* But I onely Reply that Poets do not ſpeak like Philoſophers.

The ſame Perſon relating the Prodigies that foreran the horrible Slaughter at the Battel of *Cannæ*, ſpeaks *directly* and *poſitively*.

——— *Non unus Crine Coruſco*
Regnorum Everſor rubuit Lethale Cometes. Punic. l. 8.

See! Sholes of Comets their bright Treſſes wave,
Bluſhing to ſend whole Kingdoms to their Grave.

Another giving an account of the Portentous Sights that appeared before the Civil Wars which happened

pened between *Cæſar* and *Pompey*, adds this black Character of a Comet,

Lucan. *l.* 1. *Pharſal.*

——*Crinémque Timendi*
Sideris & terris mutantem Regna Cometen.

Lo! at its wild diſhevel'd Hair
Kingdoms run mad, and Stateſmen ſtare.

I might add *Claudian*'s,

De Raptu.

——*Cometes*
Prodigiale rubens.——

And again,

Et nunquam cœlo ſpectatum impunè Cometem.

And *Tibullus* his

Lib. 2. *Eleg.* 5.

——*Belli mala ſigna Cometen.*

That

That likewiſe of another Aſtronomical Poet,

Apparere ſolent, Regalia Fata, Cometæ. Palingen. *l.* 11. *Zodiack.*

A Comet in the Heavens burns
To light great Monarchs to their Urns.

I might add to theſe a piece of venerable Antiquity, *viz.* part of the *Sybills* Verſes, (now they may deſervedly be called *Oracles*) which ſpeak of the Signs and Preſages of future Diſtreſſes.

Πολλὰ μὲν ἐξῆς Ἄρεϊ καὶ ἀκλινόεντα Κομήτην, Sibyl. *l.* 8.
Ἀνθρωποι καλέουσι τ' ἀρέϊος Σῆμα πόνοιο
Πολλῶ ἐπεχομένω, πολέμω καὶ δηϊοτῆτι.

Look

Look what Strange Lights do mount the Hemiſphere,
And in the Skies what Bearded Flames appear;
Sure Omens ever of a Labouring State,
Of bloudy Battels, and a Hoſtile Fate.

And in another place, (*l.* 3.)

——Κομήτην
Ῥομφαίας, Λιμὸν, Θανάτοιό τε σῆμα βροτοῖσιν,
Ἡγεμόνων τε φθορὰς ἀνδρῶν μεγάλων καὶ ὀπισθίμων.

What can theſe blazing Tapers elſe portend,
But Sword, and Famine, and the fatal end
Of ſome great Warriors, who are wont to call
And by bold Actions court their ſudden Fall?

I con-

I conclude this Rank of Authours with that plain Determination of ſome Ancient Sage, now ſcarce known,

Οὐδεὶς Κομήτης ὄϛις ϗ Κακὸν φέρει.

There never yet a Comet ſhone
But evil followed thereupon.

But perhaps it will be ſaid that Poets are a fancyfull ſort of People, and for that Reaſon are not much to be heeded. They talk of Men and Women turn'd into Stars, and indeed they have a gift of Extolling perſons to Heaven when they pleaſe. They will make a *Head of Hair* a *Conſtellation*, as they did *Berenice's*, and what will they not then doe with the *Shagged Locks* of a *Comet?* We know what they *have done* in that Caſe: they have repreſented them (as they ought) fierce and terrible, and though they cloath their matter in verſe, yet they are as ſe-

rious

rious as any proſe. If it be ſaid that they ſpeak according to the ſenſe of the Vulgar, (whom it is their work to pleaſe,) and therefore are the leſs to be attended to, I anſwer for them and my ſelf together, that though I do not find my ſelf inclined to be led by Popular Humour and Caprice, yet I ſee no reaſon to reject and explode an Opinion becauſe it is Common, and hath had the General Suffrage of Mankind to vouch it. This ſhould rather prompt us to embrace it with the greater Serioufneſs, and induce us to believe, that what hath thus gained the Univerſal Vogue of the World, is certainly founded on ſome clear Deductions of Reaſon which are Common to the whole Race of Men.

But I will paſs from the *Poets* to *Others* who are thought to be of Profounder Judgments. Expect now no Fancies and Raptures, but ſolid and judicious Determinations.

To

To begin with the great *Oratour* and *Philoſopher*, he backeth the Prince of Poets, acquainting us that in the Civil War between *Octavius Auguſtus* and *Mark Anthony*, it was obſerved that Comets were the Harbingers of the Miſeries that then befell them: *Stellæ quas Græci Cometas, noſtri Cincinnatas vocant, nuper bello Octaviano magnarum fuerunt Calamitatum prænunciæ.* Cicero. *l.* 2. *de Nat. Deor.* And in the ſame place he leaveth this ſerious Memoire for Poſterity to conſider of, That this is a Truth which hath been confirmed by various Examples (many of which he inſtances in) from All Antiquity.

Next let us hear the two Excellent *Natural Philoſophers* who writ purpoſely of Comets (if I may once again bring them in to teſtifie in this Cauſe, after I have done it ſo often.) A Comet (ſaith *Pliny*, *l.* 2. *c.* 25.) is *Terrificum magna ex parte ſidus, ac non Leviter pi-*

atum. A Star (ſo he calleth it) which in a huge manner terrifies and aſtoniſhes the World, and never goes off without great Miſchief. And he ſheweth the Truth and Experience of this in the foregoing Age and in his own. Take *Seneca's* Thoughts in thoſe few but plain words, *Nat. Qu. l. 7. c. 17. Cruenti quidam, Minaces, qui Omen poſt ſe futuri ſanguinis ſerunt.* Some Comets (he would have ſaid *All*, but that his Maſter *Nero* was not to be offended, as you ſhall perceive afterwards) are very cruel, and threaten us with the worſt of Miſchiefs: they bring with them and leave behind them the ſeeds of Bloud and Slaughter.

Next, let us look into a few *Hiſtorians*, and ſee whether they were of the ſame Mind. The Comet which was ſeen in *Nero's* time is thus mentioned by one that writes his Life, *Stella Crinita, quæ ſummis Poteſtatibus exitium portendere vul-*

Sueton. *in* Nerone.

gò

gò putatur. But this being an Account onely of the vulgar Opinion, let us hear him ſpeak his own ſenſe; which he doth in another place thus: *Præſagia mortis ejus præcipua fuerunt exortus Crinitæ ſtellæ, quam Cometen vocant.* The chief and moſt Conſiderable Preſage of the Emperour *Claudius* his Death was a Comet which was obſerved to riſe in the Heavens. The *Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtorian* gives us this Note upon *Gainas* (that bloudy *Arian*) his Beſeiging *Conſtantinople*, Τοσοῦτος δὲ ἦν ὁ ὑπερεμαθὴς τῇ πόλει κίνδυνος, ὡς καὶ Κομήτην Μέγιστον ἐκ τοῦ ὁρᾶσθαι, καὶ μέχρι τῆς γῆς διήκοντα, καὶ οἷον ἀδεὶς ἐθεάσατο πρότερον μηνύειν αὐτόν. So great was the danger which hung over the City, that it was *preſignified* and *portented* by a huge Comet that reached from Heaven to Earth, the like to which no man ever ſaw before. What ſaith another in his Relation of a Comet which appeared before the Death of *Johannes*

Sueton. *in* Claudio.

Socrates *Eccl. Hiſt. l.* 6. *c.* 6.

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Sueton. *in* Claudio.

Socrates *Eccl. Hiſt. l.* 6. *c.* 6.

Cedren. *Hist. compend.*

Tzimiscas the Emperour of the East? Προεμήνυε δ' οὗτος τὴν τοῦ Βασιλέως θάνατον, καὶ τὰς μελλούσας κατασχεῖν τὴν Ῥωμαίων γῆν ἐκ τῶν ἐμφυλίων πολέμων ἀπαραμυθήτους τύχας. It foreshewed the Death of the Emperour, and those immediate Calamities which were to befall the Roman Dominions by reason of their Civil Wars. And of a wonderfull large Comet that was seen in the Reign of *Constantine*, Sirnamed *Monomachus*, he speaketh thus, Προεμήνυε δ' οὗτος τὰς μελλούσας ἐπισυμβήσεσθαι κοσμικὰς συμφοράς· It Portended Calamities that were to befall the World in a short time after. Shall I set down here the memorable Words of *Anna Comnena*, that Learned Lady, the Daughter of *Alexius*, the Greek Emperour, whose Life she writ, and call'd it *Alexias*? She, speaking of a great Comet that was taken notice of before the breaking in of the Galls upon them, thus delivereth

eth her ſenſe: Ἔδει γὰρ τὴν μελλόντων καινισθῆναι ξενοπρεπῶς πράγματων προοίμιά τινα προκαταγγελτικὰ τούτων μηνυθῆναι ἄνωθεν. This happened (ſaith ſhe) by the uſual Adminiſtration of Providence in ſuch caſes, for it was not fit that ſo great and ſtrange an Alteration of things as was brought to paſs by that coming of theirs ſhould be without ſome previous Denunciation and Admoniſhment from Heaven, *Alexiad. l.* 12. And this Noble Female Hiſtorian tells us, that all the Enquiry then of Spectatours was, Τίνων ὁ Ασὴρ ἄγγελος ἔρχεται; What Evils doth this New Light in the Heavens come to warn us of? What ſtrange Tidings doth this Meſſenger from above arrive with? Let me adjoin the remarkable words of *Machiavel*, that great Maſter of Hiſtory and Policy, who thus ſpeaks of Comets, *Ut ut ſe res habeat, Experientiâ certè compertum habemus talia ſigna ſequi ſolere magnos*

nos aliquos Motus. However it cometh to paſs, ſo it is, that we have it vouched by Experience, that ſome great commotions are the conſequents of ſuch Signs as theſe. *Diſp. l.* 1. *c.* 56.

Now I will produce profeſſed *Mathematicians* and *Aſtronomers* who have maintained the *Preſage of Comets.* And not to name *Claudius Ptolemæus*, the Prince of Aſtrologers, who flouriſhed about 135 Years after Chriſt, and ſettled this Doctrine in the 98, 99, and 100 Aphoriſms of his *Centiloquium*; I will onely make uſe of ſuch as are Enemies to the Judiciary part of Aſtrology, and ſome of whom have profeſſedly writ againſt it. Such a one was the admirable *Tycho Brahe*, who yet denieth not the Preſage of Comets, It being irrational (ſaith he) to think that God and Nature ſhew theſe unuſual Lights to no purpoſe, and that they are of no uſe to the World: and accordingly he

he ſets down his Conjectures and Prognoſtications of the New Appearances then in the Heavens. Onely he condemns thoſe who are peremptory, and imagine their Conjectures to be infallible, and in the cloſe of the firſt Tome of his *Progymnaſmata* (where he delivers this) he laments the Weakneſs and Shallowneſs of our Knowledge concerning the Stars, much more of thoſe that are extraordinary Luminaries.

I forbear to tranſcribe the words of another Modern Aſtronomer, a Learned Dane, and contemporary with the Aſſiſtant to the Noble *Tycho.* You may conſult his Appendix *ad Aſtronomiam Danicam.* Longomontanus.

A Third great Ornament of Mathematicks his few words to this purpoſe are very obſervable. Writing concerning the New Appearance in 1572, *Ita mihi perſuadeo* (ſaith he) *ſtellam illam vel tunc à Deo Opt. Max. procreatam eſſe ut Magnum aliquod Portenderet, quod* Chriſtoph. Clavius.

cujuſmodi ſit adhuc ignoratur. Which though, it is confeſſed, was not ſpoken of a Comet, yet it is ſufficient to diſcover the ſentiment of that profound Aſtronomer, as to the *Preſaging Nature* of *Unuſual Sights* in the Heavens, and particularly of the *Bearded Lights* we are diſcourſing of.

Piſo. *Specul. Cometæ.*

A fourth Learned Mathematician, who writ of the Comet that appeared *A.D.* 1618. and ſaith little there in favour of the *Significancies* of thoſe Phænomena, yet at laſt he ſhuts up with theſe notable words, It is not my deſign, notwithſtanding what I have delivered of Comets, to reckon them as vain Scare-crows and Bugbears, but let there be, for all me, this Opinion fixed in Mens Minds, That there are portended by them great Evils and Calamities, whereby God (who hears and ſees what we doe, and is both Judge and Avenger) is wont to revenge the Injuries

juries which are done to him.

I could give you ſeveral Paſſages (ſavouring of a Chriſtian Philoſopher) out of the Works of that learned Profeſſour of Mathematicks in *Maidenberg*, who Commented with ſo great Credit on the Second Book of *Pliny*'s Natural Hiſtory: take that ſhort one thus, *Ideò Perterrefacti & Attoniti ſpectamus Cometas quia tot ſeculorum Obſervatio teſtatur magnas Clades orbi terrarum, Excidia Civitatum, Regnorum Mutationes, & alias publicas Calamitates per Cometas denunciari.* There is good ground for the uſual behaviour of Men as to Comets, for they have Reaſon to gaze at them with ſo much Terrour and Aſtoniſhment as they do, becauſe it hath been proved by a large Induction of Experience and Obſervation, that they denounce great Slaughters to the World, Sacking of Cities, Subverſion of Kingdoms, and other publick Diſaſters. Milichius *Commentar.*

I will

I will adjoyn alſo the Suffrage of the *Skilfull in Theology*, who cannot be denied to be competent Judges of theſe *Heavenly Objects*. One of the Ancient and moſt Renowned Fathers telleth us that a Comet foreſignified the Death of *Conſtantine* the Great; and he proceeds to pronounce *more generally*, that as often as thoſe rare Spectacles viſit the World they are the Signs of the Succeſſion of Kings, Συνίσανται δὲ Κομῆται Σημεῖα διαδοχῆς Βασιλέων φέροντες. And another ſpeaks home to the point, ſaying, Πολλάκις δὲ καὶ ἡμεῖς Κομήτην ἢ Πωγωνίην ἰδόντες, ἢ πολεμίων ἔσνωμεν προσβολὴν, ἢ λοιμὸν ἢ ἀνθρώπων φθορήν. When we ſee a Comet or Bearded Star, we know thence that the Invaſion of Enemies, or the Deſtruction of Cattel, or a great Mortality among Men are approaching. Thoſe Venerable Lights of the Primitive Church, *Tertullian*, *Auguſtine*, *Chryſoſtome*, profeſſed

Baſil *the great. Hexaëmer.*

Theodoret *Quæſt.* 15. *in Geneſ.*

profeſſed they were perſuaded that theſe New Appearances are immediately ſent by God as fore-runners of ſome diſmal Effects; but I forbear to ſet down their particular Words: and the rather becauſe I am ſenſible that the Ancient Fathers are little regarded by our Youthfull Opiniators, who are wont as rudely to pluck at *theſe Reverend Beards* as at *thoſe* of Comets. I will give theſe men a Taſte then of ſome *Divines* of *Latter Times*. Beſides what hath been already alledged out of the Writings of the Learned Profeſſor of Divinity at *Lovaine*, This may be added out of the ſame Authour, that the end and Deſign of all Comets is *Comminatio Divinæ Manûs & Flagelli imminentis*, a Threatning the Inhabitants of the Earth with ſome wonderfull ſtroke and Scourge which they ſhall in a ſhort time feel from God's Hand. An honeſt Preaching Frier will tell you as much in an Aſtrological Eſſay

Fromond. *Meteor.* l. 3. c. 3.

Campanella, *Aſtrolog.* l. 2.

Eſſay of his, where he admires the ſottiſhneſs of thoſe Perſons who cannot be brought to an Admiration of Comets, and will by no Arguments be perſuaded of a Truth which ſhines ſo bright, *viz.* That theſe extraordinary Bodies Bode Diſaſters to the World. Another Modern Clergy-man of great Note (and who might alſo have been ranked among the Mathematicians) delivers his ſenſe after this manner, *Iſta quidem quæ rariùs eveniunt, neq; Ratis ac Deſcriptis Intervallis exiſtunt, ut Cometas, Igneas Effigies Armorum, ac reliqua ejuſmodi, arbitror Signa eſſe Malorum ingruentium divitùs, & ex Alto edita ad perterrendos & commonendos homines——Non temerè creduntur Crinita illa Sidera certis temporibus oſtendi Divinitùs, velut ex alto ſigna quædam impendentium Malorum, cujus rei plenæ ſunt Hiſtoriæ. Nec is ſenſus eſt Mathematicorum tantùm ac Divinaculorum, ſed etiam*

Dionyſ. Petav. *Theol. Dogm. Tom.* 3. *l.* 1. *c.* 10.

Piorum

Piorum & graviſſimorum hominum, quos omnes (ut de Vulgi tam altè conceptâ opinione taceam) falli ac decipi, non eſt aſſeverare Prudentis. The Atteſtation of this perſon is the more conſiderable, becauſe he was a Profeſſed Enemy not onely to Genethliacal Predictions, but to all other Aſtrological Divinations, which he undertakes to confute in the 3d Tome of his *Dogmata Theologica*, book 1. chap. 9. The import of his noble Teſtimony is no other than this, that theſe rare and unuſual Bodies, which have no ſet and periodical Time of Appearing, are Certain Signs of Future Events. It is no raſh and groundleſs belief that theſe are on purpoſe ſet up on High to be as it were Beacons to give notice of ſome imminent danger, and to be looked upon as ſignifications of very dreadfull occurrences. This is confirmed by the Hiſtory of all Ages, and this is the ſenſe not onely of Judiciary Aſtrologers,

logers, and ſuch as pretend to Divination, but of the moſt godly and ſerious Heads, who certainly make a conſiderable number in the World: and no man in his right Wits will ſay that *All theſe* (not to ſpeak now of the *Vulgar*) are deceived, and conſpire in one grand Errour. I will offer you the words of a late Learned Italian Divine, Profeſſour of Ethicks in *Padua*; they are theſe: It is aſſured (ſaith he) from the known Experience of all Times, that whenſoever Comets appear, they portend ſome Changes, Slaughters and Calamities, but the Cauſe of ſuch things is not eaſily aſſigned, nor hath it been ſufficiently ſearched into by any. And afterwards, when he had enumerated ſeveral Comets which appeared in divers foregoing ages, and had aſſigned the particular Fatal Accidents which were portended by them and preſently broke out, he concludes in ſuch General words as Theſe: In

Maravigl. *Pſeudomant. Exploſ. Diſſertat.* 13.

Diſſertat. 22.

In every age of the World Comets have been obſerved to give Notice of Publick and Common Evils which were forthwith to follow them, nor is it neceſſary or expedient to quote the particular Annals of all Times to make this farther evident. And the Suffrage of this Learned Church-man is the more to be valued becauſe the Deſign and Aim of his whole Book is to invalidate the Preſages of all other Heavenly Bodies; ſo that it was the mere conviction of Reaſon and Truth that made him *Except theſe*, and declare that they are really *portentous*.

Thus you hear what Poets, Oratours, Philoſophers, Hiſtorians and Politicians, Mathematicians and Divines have ſaid of this matter. I have one Teſtimony more to add, and it is of a Perſon, who was all theſe, I had almoſt ſaid, more than theſe. For though he was no Divine by Function and Profeſſion, yet

yet how vaſtly accompliſhed he was in the Study of Theology and the Scripture, his Works have proclaimed to the World. And it is as well known how excellent a Poet, Oratour, Hiſtorian, Stateſman, *&c.* and how great a Maſter of Reaſon and all uſefull Learning he was. This man, who was *Himſelf* a *Prodigy*, thus gives us his Thoughts in few but deciſive words concerning theſe wonderfull *Oſtenta* we have been treating of, *Solent magnas rerum Converſiones præcedere Cometæ, Gladii Ardentes, aliáq; Signa ejuſmodi.* Comets, and Fiery Swords, and ſuch like Signs are wont to be the Fore-runners of great Changes in the world.

Grotius *in Proph.* Joel. *cap.* 2. *v.* 30.

I have done now with my Teſtimonies, and truly I am heartily glad of it, for I affect not to muſter up the Writers, and to ſee Authours ſtand in Rank and File. I know that good Senſe will defend itſelf without a Bead-roll of Learned

ned Names. But it was *Neceſſary* on this occaſion to heap up Quotations, becauſe thoſe of the contrary Opinion are pleaſed to brag of their Authours. But I hope it will now appear that all the World is not of their ſide, and that the aſſertion which I maintain is not onely the ſenſe of the Many, but of the grave and wiſe, the ſober and judicious, and thoſe whoſe Sedate Judgments over-rule their Imaginations. Men of all Studies agree in this; Humanity and Divinity concenter here; heathens and Chriſtians, the Popiſh and the Reformed, and ſome of every Perſuaſion are heard to declare that Comets are ſupernatural Signs, and were appointed to terrifie and admoniſh this Inferiour World, and to be Precurſors of approaching Miſeries. But that which I moſt mind, is, that we have on our ſide the ableſt Judges and beſt Advocates of this Cauſe, for ſuch I reckon the truly

Pious and Vertuous to be. I have obſerved both in Mens ſtudied Writings and ordinary ſpeakings, that thoſe who favour this Point are generally found to be Perſons of a greater Inclination to Piety and Goodneſs than others are. They ſeem to have minds more Divinely enlightned, and more inwardly touched with the ſenſe of Religion and the Providence of God in managing the World. And who are they that defend the contrary? Commonly (I do not ſay always) they are Men of greater Wit than Conſcience, they know how to blanch a bad Cauſe, they delight to ſhew their Skill in maintaining an Argument and weathering a Paradox. They are likewiſe great Flatterers and Paraſites, and love to humour the Age. They nouriſh the ſottiſhneſs of People, and give Narcoticks and Opiates to thoſe that are of themſelves drowſie and ſtupid. And if this be done by thoſe

thoſe who are of that holy Function which engages them to give warning to their flock of imminent Dangers, to diſcharge the Office of Watchmen, and not to ſow Pillows under a ſoft and Effeminate Generation of Men; the Crime is yet more Black and Intolerable. They carry on the Plot of Atheiſts and Epicures, to root out the Notion of a God, to extirpate Providence, to debauch Mens Lives and Manners, and to blot out the ſenſe of another World.

I am now to enter upon the Fourth and Laſt General Part of my Diſcourſe, which is to *Anſwer* the *Objections* which are levelled againſt the foreſaid Doctrine. For ſo it is that there are a ſort of People who in defiance of the Nature of things, the clear Diſcoveries of Reaſon, the Direction of Providence, the Divine Teſtimony of Scripture, and a Cloud of Humane Witneſſes are reſolved to maintain their Poſt,

and in order to that they discharge with great fury several severe *Cavils* against the opposite side, and think thereby to fright others from coming over to Us, and imbracing our Assertion.

Gassend. *Meteor.*

First, It is Objected that our Doctrine proceeds from Pride and a haughty Spirit. These Men (say they) have an over-fond conceipt of themselves, as if God took especial care of them in every thing that happeneth. Can't a Star appear, but it must be for their sakes? What is the Reason they are so concerned? It proceeds from no other bottom than this, *viz.* The unsufferable Vanity which some abound with, who think themselves such Persons to whom Prodigies (forsooth) must be sent.

I answer,

1. That this is a gross mistake, that

that Comets or the like Prodigies appear for the ſake of one ſort of Perſons onely, or that any Intelligent man ever ſaid ſo.

2. Whereas it is ſaid that it proceeds from the Pride and vain Conceit of Men, that Comets are thought to ſignifie, I retort with undeniable Truth, that it is the effect of Pride and Arrogance to reckon them as needleſs and Trivial, and to deſpiſe the manifeſt Work of God. Nay,

3. This is an Argument of groſs Profaneneſs as well as Pride. This is clear from the *preſent Cavil* that the Patrons of that Cauſe carry on (as I ſaid) the Plot and Deſign of Atheiſtical Spirits, who would exclude God from the *Government* and *Care of the World*. Whereas it is certain that all ranks of Beings, but eſpecially rational Creatures, are under the Eye and Conduct of Hea-

ven. The Stoicks ſaid well, that as Man was made for God, ſo all things were made for Man. The whole Maſs of the Creation is ſerviceable to this Darling and Delight of the Almighty. Man *is as it were the Centre of the World in reſpect of final Cauſes*, ſaith an underſtanding Perſon. The Celeſtial Bodies as well as thoſe of a lower Order adminiſter to his beſt Advantages. When the Man after God's own Heart had *conſidered the Heavens, the Work of God's Fingers, the Moon and the Stars which he had ordained*, he cried out, (as himſelf tells us) *What is Man that thou art mindfull of him? and the Son of Man that thou viſiteſt him?* As if there were no greater Argument and Demonſtration of the Divine Care and Providence over Mankind, than what is to be obſerved in the Heavenly Bodies. And if it be ſaid that thoſe words ſpeak of the Natural and Regular Appearances

Bacon's *Sapient. Veter.*

Pſal. 8. 3, 4.

rances in the Heavens, as the Sun, and Moon, and ordinary Stars, I reply that the Argument is the ſtronger on our ſide; for if the uſual and ordinary Luminaries are a proof of God's Mindfulneſs of the Inhabitants of this Inferiour World, then much more the ſtrange and extraordinary ones are ſuch. And this is ſufficient ground to *conſider the Heavens* (as that Holy man did,) to regard and take notice of the Works of the Lord, and the Operation of his Hands, eſpecially to obſerve and admire thoſe Signs in the Heavens which ſo ſeldom appear. To look up towards them, and take an exact view of them, is moſt ſuitable to the piercing Nature of Man's Soul, and to the Erect Figure which God hath beſtowed on his Body. It is ſo far from ſavouring of Vanity and Pride to think that thoſe Prodigies are ſent for his ſake, that it is his duty to believe ſo, and to attend ſeriouſ-

ly to the import of them. For by Comets God is pleaſed as by new Arguments to urge and inculcate his preſence in the World, that when the ordinary courſe of Nature and Providence doth not move men, they may be rouzed by theſe Wondrous and Rare Objects, and have their Eyes effectually opened to ſee and confeſs a God.

A Second Cavil is of this nature, *viz.* that it hath been obſerved that great Advantages have been the Events to ſome Perſons and Places after a Comet hath appeared, and therefore there is no reaſon to reckon it as a Sign of God's Anger, but rather of his Favour. Doth not the Philoſopher thus ſpeak of the Comet which was ſeen at the beginning of *Auguſtus*'s Reign, *Cometes in uno totius orbis loco colitur in Templo Romæ, admodum Fauſtus Divo Auguſto judicatus ab ipſo.* And afterwards, *Si verum fatemur, ſalutare*

lutare id terris fuit. It was thought to be ſo auſpicious that it was worſhipped by the People of *Rome*, and the Emperour himſelf judged it to be a moſt happy Phænomenon. Plin. *Nat. Hiſt. l.* 2. *c.* 25.

I Anſwer,

1. If any one hath maintained that no good Effects or Advantages have ever followed the appearance of Comets, it is nothing to me, I do not defend it, neither is there any Reaſon for it. It is my Opinion that the very Riſe and Production of them in thoſe parts of the Heavenly Regions where they are generated is to good and excellent Purpoſes; for it is probable that the acute *Kepler* is in the right, who conceiveth a Comet to be a long Collection of corrupt and filthy matter, a kind of an Apoſtem in the Heavens, that as in Man's Body putrid Humours often gather into one part, ſo they do in the Heavenly

ly ones. And theſe ſuperfluous and excremental humours breaking out, the Æther (like the Body of Man) is thereby kept Sound and Hale, the unwholſome matter is purged and drained away by theſe Catharticks. By this means the Heavens exonerate themſelves of Noxious Qualities which had been long gathering, and would in time corrupt them. So that the evacuating of this matter is for the Preſervation of the Heavens. The Sun and other Luminaries fare the better for the expulſion of this groſs ſtuff which would otherwiſe over-run them with Thick *Maculæ*.

Thus the very Production of Comets is advantageous to the Heavens. But that is not all; they are ſo likewiſe to the Inhabitants below.

I have in the foregoing Diſcourſe granted that Comets are ſent out of *Kindneſs* and *Favour* to Mankind,

as

as well as to a *Contrary End.* They are to call the offending World to Repentance, and to remind them of their greateſt concern, which things, if they be heartily purſued, will produce unſpeakable Advantages and Bleſſings.

2. I grant that Comets have not been without good and advantageous Conſequences; and indeed it cannot be otherwiſe. For the Calamities which happen to ſome prove beneficial to others. With evil Effects there are good ones always joined; ſuch is the excellent mixture of Providence in the adminiſtration of the World. Bleſſings then may follow Comets. As ſuppoſe the *Plague* (which none will deny to be a great evil) be the natural iſſue of theſe Prodigies, yet by this a City and whole Countrey may receive great Advantage. A ſweeping Peſtilence made way for Queen Elizabeth to the Crown, by remo-

removing thoſe who were her moſt Implacable and potent Enemies. By this means a conſiderable number of bad men may be carried off; and ſome of thoſe who remain and are ſpared, may by that Mercy be reduced to a better underſtanding of themſelves, and a thorough amendment of their Lives, which are good and deſirable Effects. Or ſuppoſe *War* to be the conſequence of a Comet, who knows not that if one party is vanquiſhed, the other overcomes? Though Violence, Death and Ruine be the allotment of the former, yet Joy and Victory are the purchaſe of the latter. Thus that portentous Apparition which *Conſtantine* the Great beheld in the Heavens, though it was auſpicious to him and his Army, as the Inſcription of it told, yet it proved moſt Fatal to *Maxentius* and his Forces. Or ſay that ſome great Prince is cut off by the malign Influence of one of thoſe Heavenly Signs

Signs, then what follows but this, that as he loſes his Crown, ſo another gets it? And as his being cut off may prove a deplorable Loſs and Calamity if he were good, ſo it may happen to adminiſter the greateſt matter of Joy, and actually produce the moſt Happy Conſequences imaginable if he were of a contrary quality; and much more, if he be ſucceeded by a Perſon who wants none of the Accompliſhments belonging to the Character of a King. So that thoſe who ſtarted the Objection have gained no more than this, that what is good to one is oftentimes of a contrary Nature to another; thoſe very Events which ſome find to be Fortunate, others experience to be unlucky and Fatal. Where there is the death of Princes there will be the Succeſſion of new ones. And ſhew me any man that hath the confidence to deny this.

3. I grant alſo, that though Comets

mets portend and bring evil upon Men, yet the All-wiſe Maker and Diſpoſer of the Univerſe can derive the greateſt good to them thence. And on *This* Divine Conſideration it muſt be acknowledged that they are Heavenly Evangeliſts, and Meſſengers of glad Tidings, they are propitious Flames, and in a *Remote manner* ſigns of the Divine Favour and Good-will. But

4. I Anſwer directly, that though they may be followed with ſome *Good Events*, yet This is merely *Accidental*; becauſe it is almoſt impoſſible that any evil ſhould happen without ſome good. If we remember what was ſaid before, *viz.* That theſe Heavenly Preachers are ſent to give notice of God's Diſpleaſure for the ſins of the World, we cannot but acknowledge that their *Primary Token* is the *Evil* of *Puniſhment*, that they are Divine Preſages of Wrath and Vengeance, if Men

Men will not repent and amend. *Particularly*, to reply to the Inſtance mentioned in the Objection. It is no wonder that the Comet which appeared after *Julius Cæſar's* Death, was thought by *Auguſtus* to be auſpicious, ſince by his Death he came to ſucceed in the Empire. But he that ſhall reade the Relation of the bloudy Wars and horrid Commotions which the People of *Rome* had experience of immediately after the Riſing of that Comet, will be of another judgment, and not call it (as *Pliny* flatteringly doth) *Salutary* and *Lucky*. The grave Stoick (whoſe Morality one would imagine ſhould not teach him to be a Paraſite) ſaith that the Comet which ſhone in the beginning of *Nero's* joyfull and happy Reign, *Neronis Principatu lætiſſimo Cometis detraxit Infamiam*, took away from that ſort of Prodigies the Infamy which they lay under. It ſeems then they had before an ill name,

Senec. *Nat. Quæſt.* l. 7. *cap.* 17.

name, they were thought till that time to be unlucky and ominous. Yes, and they were thought so *then*, and *ever after*; onely *Nero* it seems was to be flattered, and *Seneca* was to let him know that that strange Spectacle in the Heavens assured great Happiness to the whole World by reason of his Reign! But will not any one who hath read the passages of that Emperour's Life abhor such rank flattery, and with greater Reason conclude that that Comet, and others that appeared in his Time, (as no less than four appeared, one whereof lasted six months) presaged the monstrous and unheard of Villanies committed by him when he ruled? That as he came into the World with his Feet forward, which made his *Birth ominous*, so the unusual Blazes in the Heavens rendred his *whole Life portentous*? Who will not say that they fore told the World of his cruel, inhumane and barbarous Exploits, void

void of all Compaſſion and Remorſe? *viz.* his ſetting *Rome* on fire that he might better conceive the Flames of *Troy*, and ſing to his Harp the Deſtruction of that City: his killing his own Mother, his putting his own Wife to Death, his diſpatching with a kick of his foot his Miſtreſs (or rather his Wife afterwards) *Poppæa*, his ſlaying his Aunt, his killing his Tutour and Maſter *Seneca*, (the very man who here flattereth him and his Comet,) his bloudy Rage againſt all his Kindred and Friends, (as *Suetonius* ſaith of him, *Nullum adeò neceſſitudinis genus eſt quod non ſcelere perculerit*,) his Madneſs againſt the Chriſtians, on whom he malicioufly laid the firing of *Rome*, his implacable Hatred of Chriſtianity it ſelf, which he ſhewed in being the firſt that ever made an Edict againſt it. It was rightly therefore ſaid of an Hiſtorian, Πρὸς τέλοις καὶ τὸ τῆ Θεομαχίας προσέθηκε μῖσος, Διώκλης πρῶτος

Cedren. *Hiſt. compend.*

πρῶτος γενόμενος τῦ Θείυ λόγυ. To all his other Villanies he added this, That he fought againſt Heaven, and was the firſt Perſecutor of the Word of God. And, as notorious Inſtances of this curſed and Helliſh Rage, Thoſe two great Apoſtles and Pillars of the Church, St. *Paul* and St. *Peter* fell by his Hands. *Pliny* had Reaſon then to call this Emperour *humani generis hoſtem*, one that had bid defiance to all Ranks of Mankind, and to ſtyle one of the Comets that was ſeen in his Reign *Sidus ſævum*, a furious and outragious Star, *l.* 2. *c.* 25. Nay, we are told that upon the ſight of a Comet he found himſelf enflamed afreſh to Bloudſhed: and he uſed to put ſome Noblemen to Death to expiate and purge away the Hurt which theſe Prodigies procure, as an Aſtrologer taught him, ſaith *Suetonius*. And the ſame is averred by another credible Hiſtorian, *Sidus Cometes, ſanguine illuſtri ſemper*

Tacit. *Annal. l.* 15.

per Neroni expiatum. And who will not likewiſe think that the unuſual and ſtrange Appearance in the Heavens in his days ſignified his unheard-of and prodigious Luſt, his Filthyneſs and Laſciviouſneſs of ſo monſtrous a nature, deſcribed partly by the Authour who writes his Life, and it may be reflected on by St. *Paul*, in *Rom.* 1. 26, 27? Who is not enclined to believe that the ſtrange *Oſtenta* in thoſe days ſeen at *Rome*, pointed at this execrable Emperour, πᾶσαν ἰδέαν ἀπολασίας καὶ παρανομίας κατακόρως μετελ-ηλυθότα, who practiſed all kind of Laſciviouſneſs and Wickedneſs to the full? Laſtly, may it not be thought that they portended his violent and Tragical End, the juſt Guerdon of his bloudy Life? Thus maugre the flattering humour of a few vain Men, theſe Sights were Boding and Prophetick, the Forerunners and Signs both of moral and penal Evils. And the ſame

Sueton. *in* Nerone. *c.* 28, 29.

Theodoret. *de Cur. Græc. Affectib. Serm.* 3.

πρῶτος γενόμενος τῆ Θείᾳ λύσσῃ. To all his other Villanies he added this, That he fought againſt Heaven, and was the firſt Perſecutor of the Word of God. And, as notorious Inſtances of this curſed and Helliſh Rage, Thoſe two great Apoſtles and Pillars of the Church, St. *Paul* and St. *Peter* fell by his Hands. *Pliny* had Reaſon then to call this Emperour *humani generis hoſtem*, one that had bid defiance to all Ranks of Mankind, and to ſtyle one of the Comets that was ſeen in his Reign *Sidus ſævum*, a furious and outragious Star, *l.* 2. *c.* 25. Nay, we are told that upon the ſight of a Comet he found himſelf enflamed afreſh to Bloudſhed: and he uſed to put ſome Noblemen to Death to expiate and purge away the Hurt which theſe Prodigies procure, as an Aſtrologer taught him, ſaith *Suetonius*. And the ſame is averred by another credible Hiſtorian, *Sidus Cometes, ſanguine illuſtri ſem-*

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Sueton. *in* Nerone. c. 28, 29.

Theodoret. *de Cur. Græc. Affectib. Serm.* 3.

may be pronounced of all the Bearded Flames that ever ſhone in the World, nay even of the Star which appeared at Chriſt's Nativity; for though the Officious Sages who came from the Eaſt rejoyced at its Appearance, yet without Controverſie, when it appeared more openly and univerſally, (as it is probable it did afterwards, as I may have occaſion to ſhew at another time, and on another Subject,) it threatned Woe and Miſery to the Unbelieving World, and likewiſe preſignified the bloudy Perſecutions which the Devil and his Inſtruments would be Authours of againſt the Followers of our Saviour.

A Third Objection is formed thus: Many Comets have been ſeen by us, but they have been followed with no miſchief throughout all *Europe:* Beſides, many Eminent and Illuſtrious Men have dyed, Kingdoms

J. Scaliger. *Exercitat.* 79. *ſect.* 2.

doms and Principalities, and Noble Families have been deſtroyed without any Notice given by a Comet.

Here are two grievous Impeachments together of the Doctrine of Comets. As to the former, *viz.* That it hath been obſerved that no Hurt hath followed Comets,

I Anſwer,

1. That notwithſtanding what this daring Objector ſuggeſts, you have heard what others, and thoſe of great Credit and Fame, have ſaid and writ. The Renowned *Kepler* hath ſet down the fatal Events of many Comets. *Ricciolus*, and *Hevelius* after him, give us a Catalogue of all the Comets that appeared before and ſince Chriſt's Birth, with the remarkable occurrences that enſued upon them in the World. And now judge whether *Scaliger* (who was a man that would

ſay any thing for his Cauſe) outweigheth this Tripple Teſtimony of Perſons of ſo good Account: beſides that *Others* might be made uſe of here to atteſt the ill effects of Comets in the ſeveral Ages of the World.

2. Whereas ſome tell us that no evils have been the Conſequences of the Comets which they have ſeen, I have this to ſay to them, that it is none of my fault that they do not live to ſee thoſe Conſequences. They profeſs they behold no hurtfull Effects of Comets, and thence raſhly infer there are none. But I retort upon them with that which is ſatisfactory to me, (and may be ſo to them,) that the Hurt and Evil are *deferred*, but may *come at laſt*. This may happen thus, becauſe of the Nature of Things themſelves, Comets do not always operate preſently, by reaſon of ſome Indiſpoſitions and Altera-

terations in the Elements, and the Dependence they often have on ſeveral Cauſes. For this Reaſon it may be we feel at this very hour part of the Effects of thoſe Comets, which viſited us in 1664, and 1665. And it may be we ſhall not experience the full Influence of the two laſt which appeared, till ſome years hence. Say not then, becauſe you ſee not the Effects of theſe ſtrange Shews, that they are vain Sights, and becauſe they are not followed forthwith with notable Alterations, that therefore there are no Evils that iſſue from them. Moreover, It is againſt the Nature of theſe Prodigies that they ſhould have a ſpeedy effect, for (as hath been ſaid) they are ſent to warn Men of the Judgments which their repeated Crimes deſerve, and to ſtir them up effectually to be ſenſible of their condition, and to mourn for their Offences, and implore the Divine Favour, and betake themſelves to

Newneſs of Life. For the Performance of Theſe the great Lover of Mankind allots them ſome conſiderable time, and accordingly doth not preſently inflict the puniſhments which he threatneth, but expecteth and waiteth for their amendment. And if that happens, He wholly *Averteth* his Wrath and Indignation. Which directs me to another Anſwer to the Objection, and it is this,

Suppoſe the Obſervation had ſome Truth in it, *viz.* That fatal Changes and calamitous Accidents have not ever been ſeen to be the conſequences of Comets, who is there that cannot dive into the *Reaſon* of it? Which is no other than *this*, That the Divine Goodneſs and Philanthropy, and Man's timely Repentance and Converſion prevent the inflicting of thoſe Calamities which were portended by the appearing of the Heavenly Prodigies,

gies. God *ſends not* thoſe Evils which he *Threatned.* That is all that can be gathered. How idly and incoherently then do they diſcourſe who deny all Preſage of Comets, becauſe they do not preſently feel the Effects of them? Nay, how impiouſly and blaſphemouſly do they talk who aſſert it *Ridiculous* that God ſhould intend theſe to be Monitors of Repentance, and yet not let us ſee the Fatal Events produced by them?

And thus I think the firſt part of the Objection is pretty well cleared: and Men may ſometimes look for the Effects of Comets, and not eſpie them, not becauſe Comets are not by God's Appointment Threatning and Preſaging, but becauſe the Infinite Compaſſion of Heaven *deferreth* or *averteth* the impendent Judgments. Which agreeth with what was maintained before, *viz.* That Comets are not Preſages wholly of Evil, but they are likewiſe Colla-

Collaterally and Remotely Tokens of Mercy to Mankind, *i. e.* if they Repent: otherwiſe they denounce nothing but Vengeance.

Theſe Bodies then do not *Neceſſarily* and *Unalterably* ſignifie Evil, but *Conditionally*, *i. e.* if it ſhall ſeem good to God, and if the Inhabitants of the Earth do not repent of their ſins. And indeed it was rightly ſaid by a celebrated Jewiſh Doctor, All the Evils that God threatneth to Men, are threatned with this condition, If they do not repent. So that Comets ſpeak not the *abſolute* and *inevitable Futurity* of ſuch Events, but let the Perſons know to whom they are ſhewed what they are to *expect*, and what ſhall certainly happen unleſs God be pleaſed, for Reaſons and Inducements beſt known to himſelf, to interpoſe between the Sign and the Events. The great and exceſſive Drought in 1681. may be reaſonably looked upon as the Effect of

R. Kimchi *in* Jon.

of the Comet in 1680. And we may remember what was the conſequent of that unuſual drineſs of the Earth, *viz.* The price of Hay in a Months time, or a little more, was riſen from 15 *s.* a Load to 40 *s.* and we were in expectation of more diſmal Effects of that Drought. But the price of the aforeſaid commodity fell in few months to its ordinary Rate, and we were delivered from our other Fears. Thus the God of Heaven ſhewed us what we *deſerved*, and then was pleaſed to *remove* it.

Thus it is poſſible ſome expected Events may be fruſtrated, and yet Comets in their own Nature, and by God's Appointment, are ominous and prognoſtick.

And as for the latter part of the Objection, *viz.* That it is obſerved ſometimes that God ſends Calamities where Comets have not been the Forerunners, and therefore it is likely

likely no Calamities are cauſed or ſignified by them.

I have theſe two things to anſwer:

First, it doth not follow that, becauſe Comets foreſignifie Wars, Peſtilence, Famine and the Death of Princes, therefore a Comet muſt neceſſarily appear as often as Famine or Plague approach, or whenever Wars and Deaths of Princes allarm the World; for it dependeth wholly on God's free Will and Pleaſure, whether there ſhall be *any Signs* or no: and as to the *Time* of exhibiting them, that alſo is at God's diſpoſal. Beſides, the Argument is fallacious, for though *every Plague*, or War, or Dearth be not uſhered in with a Comet, yet it doth not follow thence that *none* are, or may be.

Secondly, Though all the great and publick Calamities that happen be

be not preſaged by Comets, (as I readily grant) yet they may be, and uſually, if not always, are by *ſome other Forerunners and Signs*, if not in the Heavens, yet in the Air, or Earth, or Waters; for there are other Omens beſide thoſe above.

This then doth not in the leaſt diſanul what I aſſert, that ſome great and extraordinary Events (and ſuch are ſuppoſed to be rare as Comets themſelves are) are preſignified and procured by thoſe Bodies, and that at what time ſoever they appear, future Perils and Diſtreſſes, of one kind or other, are threatned to the World, and though they are not ſeen or felt in one part of it, yet they may be in another.

And under this Head likewiſe, and by virtue of what hath been ſaid here, the frivolous Objection of thoſe Men is removed, who deny all Significancy of Comets, becauſe they are not ſuch Signs as directly

rectly and positively point at *particular Evils and Events*, because we cannot learn from them what certain Evil will befall the World. Hence they are styled by the Objectours *Useless and Fallacious Signs*, and it is unbecoming God's Wisedom (say they) to set up such in the World.

Thus they irreverently and wickedly teach men to despise God's Works. And (which is the more to be lamented) such Language falls from the Pens of great Pretenders to Divinity and Philosophy.

Fourthly, It is Objected that some Comets travell many Countries, and pass over the Heads of divers People, as particularly the Dreadfull Comet in 1680. was seen not onely all over *Europe*, but in the most remote parts of the World: How then can it be known what particular place it was design-

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ed for? Who can tell where its Influence is to light? Is there any Reaſon why we of this Iſland ſhould be concerned? Many things may be ſaid to ſilence this Cavil:

1. If a Comet be univerſal (as is ſuppoſed in the Objection) then its *Influence* is ſuch likewiſe, and then we are certain that we, as well as other Countries, are concerned. But,

2. Suppoſe we cannot tell to what place a Comet hath a ſpecial Reſpect, and at which Nation it doth as it were levell its malign Rays, yet the *Appearance it ſelf* ought to make us carefull, and to provide againſt ſuch Events as may happen, becauſe we may be (for ought we know) particularly concerned. And this is the whole deſign of this Treatiſe. Yet let it be remembred,

3. That

3. That though a Comet travells through ſeveral Countries, and ſheweth its flaming Train among many People, yet they are not all equally under its Influence. For though it may be ſeen by ſeveral Countries, yet it is not directly and vertically placed over them all, but darts its Beams Perpendicularly on one or ſome onely. And whereas ſome curiouſly obſerve *which way* theſe blazing Lights *caſt their Rays and ſpread their Train*, I look on it as the product of vulgar Errour and Miſtake, (though I know too that ſome of the Learned are pleaſed with it) for this ſort of Bodies always turn their Faces to the Sun, and their Tails from it: ſo that there can be no ground to make any Judgment of their looking towards this or that Countrey or Kingdom. But it is reaſonable to obſerve how high they mount, and whether they hang perpendicularly over our Heads; for the farther they climb

climb in our Hemiſphere, the more powerfull are their Rays, and their Influence the more pregnant. This too is to be conſidered that the *longer Time* they ſtay with us, and the *oftner* they appear, the greater undoubtedly is the Preſage which we may expect from them. And we are to conſider the *Magnitude* of a Comet as well as the time of its Duration; for the greater it is, the Effects of it are proportionably ſo too, and they continue the longer. All theſe things muſt be attended to, and then we ſhall eaſily be induced to grant that the Influence of Comets is not *alike* as to all Countries and People. To inſtance in the Comet in 1680. whatever Influence and Aſpect it had on other Regions and Inhabitants, We of this Iſland may be convinced from the Premiſſes that it nearly concerned us: for its *apparent Greatneſs*, *height of Aſcenſion*, and *Continuance* are ſo many Demonſtrations

of it. How *large* muſt it needs be when, being ſituated not far from the Horizon, it almoſt reached with its Tail to the Zenith, or Mid-Heaven? How great think you was it when it was ſeen to extend it ſelf in length about 50, nay, ſometimes 60 Degrees of our Hemiſphere? And the *time of its ſtay* alſo was very conſiderable, and made it the more portentous and terrible: for it appeared two whole months together, unleſs when the Clouds hindred it from being ſeen; and it was three months viſible in one place or other, which is the utmoſt and longeſt Duration generally of a Comet. I have read but of two that attained to this, *viz.* That Sword-Comet which hung over *Jeruſalem*, and that which was ſeen in the beginning of *Nero's* Reign, which laſted ſix months, if *Seneca* may be credited (*Nat. Qu. l.* 7. *c.* 21.) though *Pliny*, who lived at that time, tells us, (*Nat. Hiſt.*

Hiſt. l. 2. *c.* 25.) that Fourſcore days is the longeſt ſpace of time any Comet continueth, which wanteth a hundred days of ſix months.

It is certain that the extraordinary Continuance and Duration of that late terrible ſpectacle, ſignified that the Events which were to inſue it ſhould continue long. And the *laſt* which appeared, *viz.* in the Year 1682. made a conſiderable ſtay, and tarried many weeks with us, and though its *Magnitude* was not to be compared with that of the former, yet its *Aſpect* and *Influence* are to be accounted the more ſignificant, becauſe it viſited us with ſuch quick returns, *i. e.* not onely in the Evenings, but in the mornings.

4. I add, that even all thoſe Countries and Nations which Comets ſucceſſively viſit, may ſucceſſively, and in due time, feel the effects of them. The Influence may

reach every one of them at laſt: for there is at the ſame time a circular and periodical Motion in Bodies Politick as well as Natural: and Countreys by Sympathy communicate Evils to one another, particularly we may gather that that aſtoniſhing Comet in 1680. which was viſible to all *Europe*, and other parts of the World, ſhall be of univerſal Influence, and many Nations ſhall ſhare in the Revolutions and Occurrences which it ſhall produce. Common Artiſts take occaſion to ſpeak of the Signs it paſſed through, and there they are full of roving Conjectures and Uncertainties; but we may ſafely infer this from its paſſing through ſo *Many*, *viz.* Seven Signs and an half, that it is probable a very conſiderable part of the World is concerned in the Effects and Conſequences of it. General Diſtreſſes and Troubles ſhall be complained of, there ſhall happen Catholick and

and ſpreading Calamities, and (which is always to be implied, if God or Man do not interpoſe, the one by infinite Clemency and Forbearance, or the other by Repentance and Amendment) Evils of a very vaſt Circumference ſhall environ the World.

A Fifth Objection is plauſibly raiſed from 10. *Jer.* 2. Thus ſaith the Lord, *Learn not the way of the Heathen, and be not diſmayed at the Signs of Heaven, for the Heathen are diſmayed at them.* Whence it may be inferred that it is wicked and Paganiſh to imagine any Signs or Tokens in the Heavens, and that it is the guiſe onely of the deluded Gentile World to be afraid of them, and therefore the Preſage of Comets is hereby caſhiered.

I Reply,

1. It is Nonſenſe to argue from this place that there are no Signs in the Heavens, when the very Text ſuppoſes and grants it, expreſly calling them the *Signs of Heaven.*

2. Theſe *Signs* are the ordinary Heavenly Bodies, called in the Holy Style the *Hoſt of Heaven*, the Sun, Moon and Stars; and to theſe may be adjoined the extraordinary Bodies which are ſeen in the Heavens, as Comets. Now God commands his own People not to be *diſmayed* at any of theſe, as the *Heathens* were wont to be, who believed theſe Heavenly Bodies to be alive, and that they governed all things here below by their great Power: they thought that all their affairs depended wholly on theſe, and therefore they were put into great Diſorders by ſuch Notions, and were ſtruck with ſtrange Affrightment and Aſtoniſhment. Their fearing of them put them upon worſhipping

ſhipping them as Gods, and as if they had Divine Power. Thus the *Heathens* thought and practiſed, but God's *Choſen People* are forbid the ſuperſtitious reverencing and worſhipping of theſe. And not onely an Idolatrous Fear is diſallowed them but any other that is unbecoming and diſorderly: they muſt not be troubled and caſt down, *diſmayed* and dejected at any unuſual Appearance in the Heavens, ſo as to diſtruſt God's Providence, and act things unworthy of their Holy Profeſſion. The Heavenly Bodies are *Signs*, and ſome of them very terrible ones, but they muſt by no means fright good men out of their Duty, or into a diſeſteem of God's governing the World. Queen *Elizabeth's Facta eſt alea*, was very brave and becoming upon occaſion of one of her Courtiers diſſuading her from looking on a Comet which appeared when ſhe lay at *Richmond*. But ſhe commanded the Windows

to be ſet open, and uttered thoſe gallant words, *Facta eſt alea*, The Die is caſt (ſaith ſhe) by the Divine Hand; as we cannot diſappoint, ſo neither ought we to be unchriſtianly afraid of it.

Comets being *Signs*, they muſt be taken notice of, for they were ſet up for that end, or rather not they, but the Hand and Voice of God in them are to be obſerved and dreaded. Moſt appoſite to which purpoſe is that which I have read in the Life of *Charles* the Great. A vaſt and dreadfull Comet ſhone in the cloſe of this great Monarch's Reign: Upon the riſing of which new Light in the Heavens, he aſked what it foretold? Imagining (what indeed happened, and is often foreſignified by ſuch Apparitions) that his Death was near at hand. *Eginardus*, with whom he held conference at that time, (a great Philoſopher and his Secretary, who writ this Prince's Life) anſwer-

Eginhardus *in vit.* Car. Mag.

anſwered him more like a Divine than a Philoſopher, in thoſe words of Scripture which I juſt now deſcanted upon, *Be not diſmayed at the Signs of Heaven.* To which the Emperour replied, that he was not diſmayed at ſuch kind of Signs, but feared and reverenced the Powerfull Cauſe and Divine Framer of them, who being incenſed with Anger againſt a People or Prince, is wont by theſe to admoniſh them of his Wrath, and to call them to Repentance that they may avoid it. And this is the ſum of all that I have ſaid concerning the Preſages of Comets.

Sixthly, and Laſtly, It is objected that if Comets be ſignificative and portentous, then there is as much Reaſon to believe that the other Heavenly Bodies, as the Planets and the fixed Luminaries, and their ſeveral Motions and Aſpects are ſo too, and by this means we open

open a door to all the ſuperſtitious Obſervations, and groundleſs Prognoſtications of *Judiciary Aſtrology*, whereby ſome men pretend to divine the greateſt Events that ſhall happen, and to foretell the Fate of Kingdoms and Common-wealths.

Having delivered my Sentiments freely and impartially concerning thoſe great and glaring Lights and their Preſages, which I undertook chiefly to treat of, it remaineth now that in Anſwer to this Objection, I do with the ſame freedom preſent you with my thoughts concerning the *Judiciary part* of that Noble Science of *Aſtrology*, and that I enquire whether there can be any real Preſaging from the ordinary Bodies of Heaven, as the Sun, Moon and Stars, and what inſight into futurities any man of Reading, Study and Obſervation may gain by being acquainted with their Motions.

I know

I know very well that it is the humour of Writers to oppoſe and flatly deny all that their Adverſaries ſay, and to run counter with every Propoſition they lay down, and for no other Reaſon oftentimes than becauſe they are theirs. And the main and onely deſign of theſe Perſons being this, to be victours; it is not to be wondred at, that they behave themſelves after this rate. But I (having no other deſign than that *Truth onely* may have the *Victory*) will not tread in their ſteps. And indeed it is a fond and abſurd Cuſtome, and ſuch as is unbecoming Rational Minds, to hold all or nothing of an Opinion about which the Diſpute is raiſed. I am ſure if this had not been wilfully kept up, there had been an end e'er this of moſt of the Controverſies that trouble the World. I will endeavour therefore to ſilence and compoſe this Quarrel which I am now entring upon by going another way

way to work, namely, by fairly granting ſomething, that I may more impregnably hold the reſt.

How zealous are ſome in diſcarding the whole Hoſt of Heaven from influencing in the leaſt on things here below, even the meaneſt Occurrences of Man's Life? They think they are bound to run down all the orders of Heavenly Bodies at once. The Sun (ſay they) which is the greateſt Luminary, hath no way to act but by its Light and Heat, and its buſineſs is onely with the Earth, Minerals, Plants, and mere Animals. The Moon and the reſt of the Planets are heavy, dull things; they cannot doe more than the Earth, that being as good a Planet as any of them, and the Earth influenceth as much on them as they upon it. The fixed Stars are too far off, beſides that the Situation of them is ever the ſame. And thus they are all uncapable of doing any feats in this lower

lower World wherein we live. But I muſt declare for my part, that I look upon this as too high and ranting. I am willing to grant that the Heavenly Bodies *Act* on Things and Perſons on Earth, and that they are likewiſe *Signs:* and yet this is no prejudice to our fore-eſtabliſhed Doctrine. To prove this let us look into the firſt Creation and Inſtitution of the Heavenly Bodies: and there it is moſt likely we ſhall find the *true Ends* and *Uſes* of them. And theſe are no leſs than five, according to the Authentick and Canonical Account which is given of them in *Gen.* 1. 14. *&c.* I will not ſet them down in the order they are in there, yet I will be exact in the enumerating of them.

The Firſt End of them is *to give Light upon the Earth*, (v. 15.) that Men may ſee how to diſpatch their Affairs with Eaſe and Chearfulneſs.

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An ineffable Bleſſing certainly! and ſuch as the wiſeſt man takes particular notice of, when he ſaith, *Truly the Light is ſweet, and a pleaſant thing it is for the Eyes to behold the Sun*, Eccl. 11. 7. Of this the Learned Jew ſpeaks, Ἡλίᾳ γὰρ αὐγαὶ καὶ σελήνης καὶ τῶν ἄλλων πλανήτων καὶ ἀπλανῶν τὸ χάριν γεγόνασιν ὅτι μὴ τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν ἐνεργείας εἰς τὴν τοῦ ὁρᾶν ὑπηρεσίαν; What were theſe glittering Lights ſet up for, unleſs it were for the ſervice of the Eyes, to ſee by them?

Philo *de* Abrahamo.

A Second Uſe of theſe Luminaries is to be *for Seaſons*, (v. 14.) Thoſe Commentatours that interpret it of the Seaſon of *Weather*, ſhew that they attend not to the genuine ſenſe of the Original Word, מועדים. But the true meaning is, That thoſe Heavenly Luminaries were appointed for diſtinction of Times and Seaſons, whether they be for Natural, Civil or Religious Affairs.

Affairs Thus among the Jews the Feaſts of the New-moons, and Sabbaths, and other ſacred Solemnities depended on the Returns and Courſes of theſe Bodies. And ſtill the orderly Service of God is kept up by obſerving the Firſt Day of the Week, and other Periods of Time, either expreſſed by the firſt Founder of the Chriſtian Religion, or laudably conſtituted by the Church.

Underſtand here alſo *other Seaſons and Opportunities*, *viz.* of ſeveral Profeſſions and Employments in the Life of Man. Husbandmen learn hence to plow, ſow, plant, lop Trees, &c. according to the right Seaſon; of which you may reade in *Virgil's Georgicks*, and *Heſiod's* περὶ ἔργων καὶ ἡμερῶν. And as the Luminaries of Heaven are uſefull in Husbandry, ſo are they no leſs in Navigation, to direct Mariners to guide their Veſſels with ſafety and Succeſs. Τίς δὲ

τὰς

Philo *de Monarch.* τὰς ἐν θαλάττῃ καὶ τοιούτοις πελάγεσιν ὁδὸς ἀνέτεμε καὶ ἀνέδειξε πλωτῆρσι εἰ μὴ αἱ τῶν Ἀστέρων φοραὶ καὶ περιόδοι; What but the knowledge of the Periodical motions and revolutions of the Stars opened and ſhewed the way to Seamen in ſo many vaſt and ſpacious Seas? And not only the Husbandman and Mariner, but the Maſters of Medicks gratefully acknowledge thoſe Luminaries to be *for Seaſons*. *Hippocrates* and *Galen* aſſert the uſefulneſs, nay, the neceſſity of Aſtrology in Phyſick. They acquaint us that Diſeaſes are rendred critical by ſuch and ſuch Returns of Planets, and according to this they give directions at what Seaſons to adminiſter Medicines. *Marcilius Ficinus*, that Noble Platonick Philoſopher and Phyſician, wrote a Piece *de Medicina Aſtrologiæ jungenda*. *Fernelius* that Learned French Phyſician, his Judgment and Practice in this caſe are well known. I queſtion not but the careſull

full obſerving and due attending of the Times of the Heavenly Aſpects and Influences are very uſefull in Phyſick, though now that courſe be laid aſide generally by Practitioners.

A Third End of theſe Lights in the Heavens is to be *for Days and Years.* v. 14. that is, by the conſtant Motion of theſe Bodies Time is meaſured and numbred, by theſe Time is divided and diſtinguiſhed into greater and leſſer portions, as Years, Months, Weeks, Days, Hours, &c. By theſe we keep an account of our Actions, we call to mind, reckon, compute, forecaſt: we underſtand the duration of Beings, the certain Intervalls and diſtances of things, the Ages and Generations of the World, which is of ſingular Uſe in Man's Life.

Their Fourth Uſe is *to divide the Day from the Night*, v. 14. or

(as it is ſaid afterwards, *v.* 18.) *to divide the Light from the Darkneſs, and to rule over the Day and over the Night.* Theſe Heavenly Bodies by their Setting and Riſing, cauſe Light and Darkneſs, and conſequently are the Authours of the ſucceſſive Returns of Day and Night to us. This is ſet them as an immoveable and never failing conſtitution, and therefore is ſtyled *the Covenant* of the Day and Night, *Jer.* 33. 20. and the *Ordinance* of Heaven, *Jer.* 31. 35, 36. And under *This Uſe* of the Heavenly Bodies is comprehended their *Warming* and *Chearing Virtue*, (eſpecially of the Sun, which brings to us *Day* and *This* together, and of which the great Obſerver of God's Works thus ſpeaketh, *There is nothing hid from the heat thereof*,) and alſo their *fructifying*, *generative* and *prolifick Faculty*, whereby they may juſtly be ſaid to *Rule*, and bear ſway in the World.

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The Fifth and Laſt Uſe of theſe glorious Lights in the firmament of Heaven (and which is the uſe of them wherein we are moſt concerned at preſent) is to ſignifie ſomething to the World: *Let them be for Signs*, v. 14. And in the place before commented upon they are called the *Signs of Heaven*. Which an Aſtronomical Poet expreſſeth thus,

Αὐτὸς γὰρ τάγε Σήματ' ἐν οὐρανῷ ἐστήριξε
Ἄστρα διακρίνας. ——— Aratus.

Here then my Buſineſs is to ſhew *how* they are ſaid to be *for Signs*, or *What* it is that they *ſignifie* to the World. Accordingly I aſſert that they ſignifie three ſorts of Occurrences, *viz.* Natural, Civil and Divine.

Firſt, They give notice to us of *Natural* things, as Rain or Drought,

Storms or Calms, Heat or Cold, Winter or Summer, with the other Seaſons of the Year, the Ebbing and Flowing of the Sea, Plenty or Scarcity of the Fruits of the Earth; in ſhort, the Change of Weather, and Alteration of the temper of the Elements. Theſe are ſignified by the Sun's Riſing or Setting with ſuch and ſuch Stars or Conſtellations, by the Acceſs or Receſs of the Planets to and from the Sun, and among themſelves. This, it ſeems, is a thing which was thought worthy to be mentioned by a Divine Pen-man, for he biddeth the Rebel-
Amos 5. 8. lious Jews ſeek *him that maketh the Seven Stars and Orion, i.e.* God, who by the Appearing of theſe, and other Conſtellations at certain times, gives notice of the different Seaſons of the Year. And this was a way of ſpeaking which well became *Amos the Herdſman*, who had been uſed to keep his Cattel, and watch in the Fields all Night,

and

and there had leiſure and opportunity to obſerve how the ſeveral Seaſons were uſhered in by theſe Lamps of Heaven. But hear what another inſpired Searcher into the Heavenly Bodies ſaith of the great Creatour, *viz.* that *He maketh Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades, and the Chambers of the South.* That is, he maketh the Year, the Parts of which are *ſignified* and known by the riſing of theſe Conſtellations; for *Arcturus*, or the Bear's Tail, a Star of the firſt Magnitude in the Northern Hemiſphere, is ſaid to ariſe in *Autumn*. *Orion*, a Southern Conſtellation, made up of many ſplendent Stars, ariſes in *Winter*. It is called *Nimboſus Orion* by *Virgil*, and is accordingly deemed by Aſtrologers to be the Cauſe of great Storms and Tempeſts. Its name in Hebrew is *Keſil*, whence perhaps the Month *Kiſleu* among the Jews (which anſwers to *November*) had its denomination, this Job 9. 9.

Conſtellation riſing in that Month. And by the bye let me ſhove in this Criticiſm, when we reade that the ſame word *Keſil* ſignifies a *Fool*, (as in *Solomon*'s Proverbs and other places) we need not wonder that a Conſtellation which cauſes *Change* of Weather, gives name to a *fooliſh*, *light*, and *unconſtant Perſon*. The *Pleiades*, or Seven Stars, ariſe in the *Spring*. And *Job* makes mention of the *Chambers of the South*, which perhaps are the Stars which ariſe in the *Summer:* and ſo the four ſeveral Quarters of the Year are ſet down. *Aratus* and *Hyginus*, and other Ancients, diſcourſe of this kind of Prognoſticks. Of theſe *Philo* the Jew ſpeaks, Γεγόνασιν ὐ μόνον ἵνα φῶς ἐκπέμπωσιν ὅπὶ τ γῆν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὅπως Σημεῖα μελλόντων προφαίνωσιν. The Stars were made not onely to enlighten the Earth, but to be ſigns of future Accidents, *i.e.* (as he there explaineth himſelf) of different Seaſons

L. de mundi Opificio.

of

of Weather. Which is his meaning in another Treatise, where he saith, Πάντων ἐστηλίτευται τῶν ἐπὶ γῆς ἐν οὐρανῷ τὰ Σημεῖα· The Signs of all these things that you see upon Earth, are set up and erected in the Heavens. And I am mistaken if the Learned Father speaketh not of these Prognosticks when he telleth us, Αναγκαία πρὸς τὸν ἀνθρώπινον βίον ἀπὸ τῶν φωστήρων παρασημείωσις, ἐὰν μή τις περὰ τοῦ μέτρου ἐξ αὐτῶν σημεῖα περιεργάζηται. The Observation of the Luminaries of Heaven is usefull and even necessary for Man's Life, unless People will beyond measure, and with an unlawfull curiosity, search into the Signs which those Bodies afford us.

Lib. de Monarchia.

Basil. Hexaëmer.

Secondly, These Heavenly Bodies were created not onely to *signifie Natural things*, but *Humane and Civil Occurrences*, and these either Private or Publick, the Con-

cerns of Families or Kingdoms. All ſorts of Actions and Events, whether good, or evil, or indifferent, may (at one time or other) be partly diſcerned from the Obſervation of the Natural and uſual Motions of the Hoſt of Heaven. For though I cannot *make out* the dependence and affinity between them and theſe, as of Effects and Cauſes, and though the Knowledge which is gained thence is uſually uncertain; yet I cannot aſſert with the boldneſs which I ſee others do, that there are no Natural Effects following from ſuch Poſitions and Situations of the Stars, but I have reaſon to believe on the contrary, that their various Motions and Aſpects are in ſome meaſure Significant.

Let us conſider then that the Seven Planets are always in one or other of the Twelve Signs, or (which is the ſame thing) they are directly under ſome part of the *Zodiack*, (which is divided into 12 parts in all,)

all,) or (to ſpeak plainer yet) the Wandring Stars move under ſome particular fixed ones, and the mutual Habitude which thoſe have to one another as they are placed under theſe (or, as Artiſts ſpeak, as they move through theſe Signs) cauſeth ſeveral *Aſpects*. And theſe Aſpects are either *Right* or *Collateral*.

A Right Aſpect is when one Planet hath a Relation to another in a Right Line. And this is either *Conjunction* or *Oppoſition*. Conjunction is when two Planets meet together in the ſame Sign of the Zodiack: Its mark is this, ☌. Oppoſition (marked thus, ☍) is when Planets are in Diametrical or oppoſite Signs, *viz.* when they are diſtant from one another half the Circle of the Heavens, *i.e.* Six Signs, or 180 Degrees.

A Collateral Aſpect is when Planets look on one another in Collateral and Oblique Lines; and this

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is Threefold, namely, *Sextile* ✶, when they are diſtant from one another a Sixth part of the Zodiack, *i.e.* two Signs, or 60 Degrees. *Quadrate* □, when Planets are removed from one another 90 Degrees of the Zodiack, or 3 Signs, which is a fourth part of the Circle. *Trine*, or Triangular △, when one Planet is diſtant from another a Third part of the Zodiack, which contains 40 Signs, or 120 Degrees. Theſe Configurations, σχηματισμοὶ, Aſpects (no leſs than five in all) happen according to the different parts of the Zodiack which the Planets are in, or move under. Hence ariſe the *Dignities* and *Infirmities*, the *Fortitudes* and *Debilities* of the Planets, for they are ſuppoſed to help or hinder, to promote or indamage one another, according to their various Situation, Aſpects and Agreements with other Planets. And among the forenamed Aſpects, Oppoſition and Quadrate

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are reckoned as malign: the reſt are thought to be favourable and benign. And among theſe latter, Conjunction is the moſt effectual of all the Radiations of the Planets, and *Sextile* is the weakeſt and Faineſt.

Now I propound it fairly and peaceably to any conſiderative Perſon, whether he can imagine that the Heavens ring all theſe Changes to no purpoſe, and ſhift their poſtures ſo often without ſome effect?

I might add, That the Planets in regard of their Motion are *Direct*, *Retrograde* and *Stationary*; whence muſt ariſe different Sites and Poſtures of them, and from theſe different Effects and Conſequences. And particularly, as for the Aſpects and Phaſes of the *Moon*, there are more of them, and thoſe likewiſe more obſervable and laſting, than of all the other Stars. Mark how often this *Proteus* changeth Shapes, and according to its various Acceſs unto

unto and Receſs from the Sun, appeareth in divers Figures and Countenances.

Let us recount the ſeveral Metamorphoſes of this Fickle Creature.

When ſhe is in Conjunction with the Sun, *i.e.* when ſhe is exactly between us and the Sun, her enlightned Part (which is more than half the Moon always, the Sun exceeding her in magnitude) is towards the Sun altogether, inſomuch that no part of her is ſeen by us. This is *New-moon*, which laſts three days, all which time it ſhineth not to us. Soon after its Conjunction, *viz.* on the fourth day, and when it is about 60 degrees diſtant from the Sun, it is *Horned*, and it ſets ſoon after Night cometh. On the ſeventh or Eighth day a *Moiety* of her appeareth, and ſhe is called *Biſect*, or a *Half-Moon:* ſhe now riſeth about 10 a Clock in the morning, and ſhe is diſtant from the

the Sun about 90 Degrees. Hitherto is her Firſt Quarter.

Then tending to her *Oppoſition* to the Sun, ſhe ſheweth a *little more than half* of her Enlightned Body, and on the 11th day is *Bunched*, being 120 degrees from the Sun. Then on the 14th or 15th day it comes to its *Oppoſition* to the Sun, *viz.* when it is 180 degrees diſtant from it, and when we are juſt between the Sun and it. This is *Full-Moon*, and is called her Second Quarter.

Theſe are the ſhapes ſhe hath in her *Increaſe*; and ſhe hath the very ſame in her *Decreaſe*, according to her various Aſpects to the Sun. She appeareth *Bunched* on the 4th day after Full-moon, *Biſect* on the 7th, *Horned* on the 11th, till at laſt ſhe comes to turn her ſelf wholly to the Sun, and to ſhew no Light to us, and then it is *New-moon*. Onely this difference is to be obſerved between the Aſpects of the Moon in her Increaſe, and thoſe in her Decreaſe,

creaſe, that her Horns are turned towards the Weſt in the latter, but Eaſtward in the former, becauſe that that part of the Moon which is enlightned is always towards the Sun.

Theſe are the uſual Transfigurations of the Moon; and what wiſe Man can think that all theſe Changes and Shiftings throughout the whole Year, have no Influence upon things below, and work not conſiderable Alterations and Changes on the Bodies and Minds of Men? Their Operation as to *Weather*, and as to ſome *Inferiour Animals* is freely confeſſed by all, long Obſervation and Experience having extorted that Acknowledgment. And there is as good ground to own their Influence on the Tempers and Diſpoſitions of Reaſonable and Humane Creatures, for the Returns of Madneſs and a Diſtempered Mind are obſerved by the exact Practitioners in Medicks, to be according to the

Revo-

Revolutions of this Planet. And what reaſon can be rendred why the ſober and well-ordered Actions of Man's Life, which are more Natural, and eaſie to be governed, receive not ſome Impreſſions from the ſame Mover? Say not that the ſeveral Phaſes of the Moon, though they ſeem to be different Apparitions, yet are but accidental Changes, and the Moon is always the ſame, notwithſtanding all her change of Apparel, and conſequently that no real Effects ought to be expected from onely ſeeming Revolutions.

This plauſible Cavil is eaſily taken off by replying that the Moon in going her monthly Circuit about the Earth, turns her ſelf variouſly to the Sun, and *really changes* her ſituation, and there are different Tranſmiſſions of the Solar Rays from her, and we receive new Reflexions and Refractions of Light thence. And let it be conſidered both in reſpect of the Aſpects of the

the Moon, and thoſe which are common to the other Planets (of which I ſpoke before) that the greateſt Effects in the World are produced by the frequent changing of a few things. Though I am not of the Philoſopher's Mind, who contends that Matter and Motion ſolve All Phænomena, yet thus far I agree with him, (and I have the Suffrage of all Intelligent Men) that new Modifications, as change of Place, Figure, Motion, and the like, effect moſt of the conſiderable things that happen in the World. Upon which account it muſt needs be that the different Situations, new Configurations, mutual Mixtures and repeated Viciſſitudes of the Heavenly Bodies prove ſome ways effectual and operative.

And as for *Eclipſes* (which may be reckoned here) I cannot but ſay in behalf of this part of Aſtrology, that theſe and the foreſaid Aſpects are in a Natural way *Signs* of future

ture things, and productive of conſiderable Events; *and upon long and faithfull Obſervation,* we may find out *what kind* of accidents happen in the ſeveral quarters of the World where they are ſeen.

I conclude this Head with the memorable words of a foreign Divine, (a Perſon of great Moderation and Judgment,) *Hic ergo eſt uſus veræ Aſtrologiæ, ut multorum effectuum qui in terris fiunt cauſas quæ in cœlo ſunt cognoſcant; aliquando etiam antequam fiunt, ipſos effectus in ſuis cauſis prævideat.* This is the uſe of true Aſtrology to underſtand from it the Cauſes which are in the Heavens of many Effects that are on Earth; and ſometimes to foreſee thoſe Effects in their Cauſes before they come to paſs. Zanchius *de Aſtronom.*

Thirdly, The heavenly Bodies are Signs (as of *Natural* and *Political Affairs*, ſo) of *things Divine, and above Nature's Order.* And as

the two former are ſignified by the *Ordinary Motions* of theſe Bodies, ſo the laſt are diſcovered by the *extraordinary and unuſual aſpect* of them. When thoſe great Luminaries are *diſturbed and out of Order*, then, and onely then they, as well as thoſe extraordinary Bodies in Heaven which this diſcourſe hath deſignedly treated of, are certain Indications of the exerting of ſome Divine Power, and the bringing to paſs ſome ſtrange things in the World. For this I take to be an unqueſtionable Maxim, that thoſe Accidents which exceed the ordinary courſe of Nature, and are above the uſual Laws and Power of it, are the particular Finger of God, and are for extraordinary ends and purpoſes. From whence I gather, that the *conſtant Courſes* of the Celeſtial Luminaries portend not evil and hurt to Mankind; but they are the *unnatural Motions*, Alterations and Appearances of them, which render

der them *prodigious.* As when the Sun hath been extraordinarily deficient, as at that darkneſs which was one of the Plagues of *Egypt*, when the Sun and Moon have ſtood ſtill, as when *Joſhuah* was taking vengeance on his Enemies: when the Stars fought againſt the Hoſt of *Siſera:* when the Sun went back in King *Hezekiah*'s days. Not onely Poets but Hiſtorians take notice of, and tranſmit to poſterity the remarkable Obſcuring of the Sun which was obſerved almoſt that whole year in which *Julius Cæſar* was unfortunately killed.

——— *Solis quoq; triſtis Imago*
Lurida ſollicitis præbebat lumina terris.

Ovid. *Metamorph. l.* 15.

From Heaven a ſhadow onely then was hurl'd
Of the Sun's Light, to ſcare the wondring World.

And another Poet thus,

Virgil. *Georg. l.* 1.

——Caput obſcurâ nitidum ferrugine texit,
Impiáq; æternam timuerunt ſecula noctem.

A ruſty ſcum eclips'd Sol's glorious Light,
And th'impious Age dreaded an endleſs Night.

Plutarch. *in* Jul. Cæſar.

And we are told by a *grave Hiſtorian* too, that *this* preſaged and accompanied that horrid Murther. The Eclipſe at Chriſt's Paſſion was a miraculous darkning of the Sun's Body; for againſt the courſe of Nature it was obſcured in Full-moon. Great *Signs from Heaven* (as it was propheſied by our Saviour) were the forerunners of *Jeruſalem*'s Deſtruction, *Luk.* 21. 11. There was an Example of an extraordinary Defect in the Sun about an hundred years

years after, ſaith a Learned Father. Seventeen days darkneſs was the attendant of *Conſtantine*'s Death, who had his Eyes put out by his Mother *Irene*, if ſome Hiſtorians may be believed. We have it from the Teſtimony of him who is Infallible, and Truth it ſelf, That *there ſhall be ſigns in the Sun, and in the Moon, and in the Stars*, before his laſt coming, *Luk.* 21. 25. *The Sun ſhall be darkned,-and the Moon ſhall not give her light, and the Stars ſhall fall from Heaven, and the powers of the Heaven ſhall be ſhaken*, Mat. 24. 29. We ſee then *what* it is that makes the ordinary Heavenly Bodies *Prodigious* and *Preſaging*, *viz.* Their being diſordered, and going againſt their natural courſe. When they are thus, they are of the nature of thoſe extraordinary and preternatural Lights which I have before diſcourſed of, whoſe very Appearance is Ominous. Tertullian *ad* Scapulam, *c.* 3.

By this we may know what notions to frame of the *Aſpects of the Stars*, the particular *Phaſes of the Moon*, and the *Eclipſes of the Sun and Moon*, before ſpoken of. It is certain that theſe, although they may ſignifie in General, and cauſe ſeveral Events, yet contain not any thing in them, *i.e.* in their own Nature, which is Boding and Unfortunate. Nor are they *deſigned* (as Comets are) to be Signs of ſome remarkable Evils and Calamities. For I build on this ground, that extraordinary Events are not foreſignified by ordinary and natural Accidents: but ſuch are the *Aſpects of the Planets*, and particularly the Conjunction of *Saturn* and *Jupiter* this year, ſo much talked of by the common Prognoſticatours. Theſe are made and come to paſs by the uſual and Fixed Motion of the Planets. They fall of themſelves into theſe Figures. Theſe are the Natural Shiftings of the Stars. And

(as

(as a demonſtration of it) theſe, like the riſing and ſetting of the Sun, and the entry of it into the Equinoctial and Solſtitial Points, and the Phænomena of that nature are certainly diſcerned, and may be foretold many hundred years before hand. And therefore they are not in themſelves portentous, they are no tokens of God's Wrath, there is nothing ſignified of the Divine Diſpleaſure by them.

But *this* cannot be ſaid of *Comets*, becauſe they are Preternatural Appearances, and being ſuch cannot poſſibly be foreknown by Art. I never read that any Aſtrologer put out Ephemerides of them. Nor can *the Shiftings of the Moon* be ſaid to be *Preſaging*, and in themſelves Ominous, and that for the foreſaid Reaſon. For though I deny not her Influence on the Bodies and Minds of Men, and as to her producing of Changes in the World, yet it is plain that ſhe was not ſet up in the

Firmament to portend approaching Diſtreſſes by her various Figures and Faces which ſhe ſheweth, for all theſe are Natural, and of courſe. She is conſtant and unvariable in her Changes: they may be all known and told long before. Beſides, any man of common ſenſe will grant me this, that what is uſual and frequent cannot be prodigious.

I might here ſay ſomething of *Eclipſes*, and it is this; I declare againſt the Doctrine of thoſe well-willers to the Mathematicks, who generally reckon theſe as ominous.

From what hath been ſaid it may be gathered, that they are not to be judged as ſuch; for they are not contrary to the uſual courſe of Nature: and what is not ſo, cannot carry any ill Omen with it. If an Eclipſe (particularly that of the Sun) be portentous in it ſelf, then every Night, which is no other than the Interpoſition of the Earth between the Sun and us, is of that Nature alſo,

alſo, and conſequently we have an unlucky time of it all our Lives. It was the Ignorance of the *Cauſe* of Eclipſes which firſt gave occaſion to People to think they preſignified ſome Evil; and hereupon the fooliſh Pagans were mightily diſturbed at this Sight; and as for the Moon, they imagined ſhe was in Labour, and accordingly came with great Noiſe and Officiouſneſs (no other than the Midwifery of Pans and Kettles) to relieve the teeming Lady. But we know that the Sun and Moon come naturally to this Situation and Poſture; and the time of their Eclipſes may certainly be foreknown, for they depend on the determined and unerring Motions of the Heavenly Bodies: they muſt happen at ſuch times, and no others. The Eclipſe of the Sun can onely be in New-moon, *i.e.* when the Sun and Moon are together in either of the two Points, *Caput* or *Cauda Draconis*, for

for the Moon cuts or croſſes the Ecliptick but in theſe two Nodes. The Moons Eclipſe is onely when ſhe is at the Full, *viz.* when the Earth is exactly interpoſed between the Sun and her, which is called *Oppoſition.* If I were purpoſely furniſhed, and had all the Implements of the Art about me, I could Infallibly foretell and ſet down all the Eclipſes that ſhall happen from this day to the end of the World. The *ordinary defections* then of theſe Luminaries, being Natural and foreknown Events, are not *Prodigious and Fatal.* And though the common Aſtrologers reckon them among *Preſages*, yet I am well ſatisfied that they doe it onely to amuſe the People, and to make themſelves and their Art more formidable.

Thus we ſee there is a vaſt difference between the ordinary Luminaries of Heaven, and thoſe that are extraordinary, as Comets. Though the

the former are not divine Preſages (unleſs when they are diſordered, and extraordinarily obſcured,) yet the latter always are ſo in their own Nature, and by the Appointment of Heaven.

I preſume this is a ſatisfactory Anſwer to the Objection, and gives a true and impartial account of the Nature of *both* ſorts of Celeſtial Bodies. The ordinary Luminaries may ſometimes be put out of their Courſes, to be Signs to the World of what the great Ruler of it is acting; but *Comets* are the *Onely heavenly Bodies* which, as to their Make, and Original, and all other Conſiderations whatſoever, diſcover themſelves to be portentous. For as for the ſtrange Apparitions of Armies and Skirmiſhes ſeen in the Air, I rank them not among the Bodies of Heaven, becauſe they are placed in a lower Region. And as for thoſe Appearances which are called *Parelia*, and *Paraſelene's*, *i.e.* Mock-Suns,

Suns, and Mock-Moons, *Halo's*, &c. they are onely Reflexions of the Clouds, and are not real things, but mere Images.

You have heard then at large the *Ends* of God's creating the *ordinary Luminaries* of Heaven. I have set down both the Natural and Instituted, the Common and Extraordinary Uses of them. One common Use (and that is it wherein Astrology is concerned chiefly) is to be Signs of Natural and Humane Actions of all kinds, to Influence by their Motion and Aspects on this Inferiour World. They are deservedly styled the *Host* of Heaven not onely because of their *great Multitude*, and their *exact Order*, but for their *Force* and *Power*. Shall every creeping Plant and Drug, every fading Herb and Flower, have their certain Virtues, and proper Offices, and shall we deny the glorious and exalted Stars of Heaven a pecu-

peculiar Power to be ſerviceable to the World? Have we not equal Reaſon to perſuade us that every Planet hath its particular Property, and all the Fixed Lights have their ſeveral faculties and diſtinct powers? I muſt needs profeſs I am of that Wiſe Man's Opinion, who ſaid, The Stars are of far greater Uſe than to yield an obſcure Light, and for men to gaze on them after the Sun is ſet. Yes certainly, God makes uſe of the Miniſtery of the Heavenly Bodies in the Oeconomy of the lower World. We are ſurrounded with Stars, ſhut up within the Heavenly Circle. All things that happen in this World have a near affinity with that other. So thought the great Soul of Philoſophy. Ἔστι δ' ἐξ ἀνάγκης συνεχής πως ἡδὶ ταῖς ἄνωθεν φοραῖς, ὥστε πᾶσαν αὐτῆ τὴν δύναμιν κυβερνᾶσθαι ἐκεῖθεν. This inferiour World is in a manner neceſſarily tied to the Motions of the upper one, in ſo much that all

Sir W. Raleigh's *Eſſays.*

Ariſtot. *Meteor. l.* 1.

all its Powers are governed by it. And therefore it is not to be denied that the glorious Lights of Heaven were conſtituted by the firſt Framer of them, to act and influence upon humane Bodies as well as others.

There is then a lawfull Natural Knowledge of the Influence of the Stars, and of the poſition of the Heavens, which is ſerviceable to it. *Aſtrology* is a part of Natural Philoſophy, which from the knowledge of Celeſtial Bodies prognoſticateth of Events in the Sublunary Bodies below: and conſequently the Actions of Men, who are partly made of thoſe, depend in ſome manner on their Influences. But *Judiciary Aſtrology* hath heard ill, becauſe by it ſome make a Judgment of the *Inclinations* of *Mens Wills*, on which depend the chief Events of Humane Life, and all the remarkable Affairs of States and Kingdoms. Wherefore the great Queſtion is, whether the Heavenly Bodies have an Influ-

Influence on the *Mind* and *Thoughts*, the *Free-will* and *Determinations* of Men? In ſatisfaction to this main Demand I aſſert, That the Heavenly Bodies act upon the Bodies of Men, and *theſe* influence upon their *Minds*. I do not ſay that the Celeſtial Luminaries act *immediately* and *directly* on the Soul of Man; for after that manner onely they work on his Body: but this is it which I maintain, That the Motions and Aſpects of the Heavens incline the Mind and Will by Mediation of the Senſitive Appetite, which is ſtirred by the conſtitution of the Body. For I take it to be an indiſputable Truth, that Bodies ſtrong in humours, and weak in Vertue or Grace, draw and incline the Mind and Affections: and therefore thoſe Creatures that are guided by their Natural and Senſual Appetites, as Brutes and wicked Men, do moſt of all feel the force of the Heavenly Bodies. And for this Reaſon the Aſtro-

Aſtrologers of this degenerate Age, theſe dreggs of Time, have the better of moſt of thoſe who have been their Predeceſſors. Now they may come the neareſt to Certainty in their Prognoſticks. They may the more eaſily tell true, becauſe ſo few reſiſt their own vitious Inclinations. One would think on this ſcore that Judiciary Aſtrology were now at its height and utmoſt culmination. It muſt needs prove ſuccesfull now or never, for the debauched Lives of Men acquaint us, that they follow their own Natural *Genius* and pronity of Mind, they are led wholly by their depraved Wills and Affections. Wicked and diſſolute Men, whom an inſpired Writer calleth *Wandring Stars*, know no other conduct but their extravagant Luſts, and thoſe inbred Inclinations and Propenſions which they derive from their Fleſhly Conſtitutions and Bodily Tempers: and thus the Stars may be ſaid to influence

Ep. Jude, 13. *v.*

ence on the Natural *Inclinations* of Men, and conſequently ſuch *Acts* as proceed from them: for they act on the Body, and the Body worketh on the weak and ungoverned Mind, and ſo Evil Actions are produced.

From what hath been hitherto diſcourſed, we may in ſome part underſtand the *true Uſe* of Aſtrology, and likewiſe the *Abuſe* of it, which is no other than this, *viz.* Attributing too little or too much to the Stars: We may frequently ſee men running into theſe Extremes either of Defect or Exceſs. The Abuſe of Aſtrology on one hand is depriving the Heavenly Bodies of all Influence and Operation on the Sons of Men: and this I have ſpoken of already. On the other hand this Science is abuſed whilſt too great a Power and too exorbitant a Regency is aſcribed to thoſe Bodies. This is done when

ſuch an Agency and Virtue is given to them by us, as is prejudicial and derogatory,

1. To God's univerſal Power and Government.
2. To the Agency of Man's Will: And,
3. To the Concurrence of other Cauſes.

In *theſe Three* the Judicious Reader will find the whole *Abuſe* of Aſtrology (as to this latter extreme of it) ſumm'd up. For they who immeaſurably and proudly brag of this Science, defend the Stars to be, as it were, Divine Agents, or that they are inſtead of God: and they go ſo far as to deſtroy the native or acquired Freedom of Man's Faculties: and they exclude all other Cauſes (but the Stars) from having a ſhare in mens Actions. On the *Contrary*, if we would avoid the exceſs and Extravagancy of Aſtrology, if we

we would correct ſo wild a Folly we muſt let *God*, *Man's Will*, and *Joynt Cauſes* have their due place.

Firſt, I ſay, Aſtrology is ſhamefully abuſed when Men attribute ſuch a Power to the Heavenly Bodies as to deny God's Government and Superintendency, or, (which is all one) when they deprive God of his Sovereign Power and Dominion to give it to the Stars. Some of the High-flown of this Faculty have been guilty of excluding the Divine Providence and Concourſe, whilſt they have defended the Influence or rather Efficiency of the Celeſtial Powers. This is a-kin to that Pagan Perſuaſion, That theſe Bodies have a certain Divinity in them, and that they fatally and neceſſarily act upon us. Hence the *Chaldeans* and others offered Sacrifice to the Stars, and expected all good or evil from them (which is making them *Gods.*) The *Epicu-*

Plin. *Nat. Hiſt. l.* 2. *c.* 8.

reans held that every one had his proper Star, as a peculiar Dæmon or Numen. And not onely the *Gentiles* but *Jews* polluted themſelves with the Worſhip of the Hoſt of Heaven, *Manaſſes* being their chief Perverter herein, 2 *Chron.* 33. 3. But if ſome who pretend to Aſtrological Studies are not directly guilty of this, (as I cannot prove they are) yet they act almoſt as profanely, whilſt they extravagantly and impiouſly extoll the Power of thoſe Bodies above, even ſo far as to deny God to be the principal Moderatour and Diſpoſer of all Affairs; and whilſt they aſſert that extraordinary and preternatural Events, and ſuch as depend wholly on God's mere Pleaſure, and have no Relation at all to natural and common Cauſes, are the Effects of the Motions and Aſpects of the Stars, and might have been foretold and prognoſticated by them. A moſt Intolerable Arrogance and Blaſphemy!

For

For though I have above granted (and am always ready to grant what is Reaſon and good Senſe) that God may and doth make uſe even of natural Inſtruments in the production of ſupernatural Effects, yet this is a thing that is exceeding rare; and then alſo it is impoſſible that theſe Arbitrary Effects ſhould be foretold by any Knowledge that Men have of the Stars. But there are *ſome* ſupernatural Effects and Productions which depend not in the leaſt on ſecond Cauſes, but are wrought by God himſelf, without the aſſiſtence of Inſtruments or any Means, nay, even in defiance of all Secondary Cauſes, as moſt of the Miracles of the Old and New Teſtament, and theſe could never be prognoſticated by the Stars. And therefore the Inſolency and Impiety of thoſe is to be abhorred, who have told the World in Print, that the Judgment of God in the Deluge of old, and all the Appearances

Albumaſar, Pomponatius, Cardan, Vaninus.

Albertus Magnus, Lucas Gauricus, *Prelates.* Petrus de Aliaco, Cuſanus, *Cardinals.*

of Angels afterwards, and the Propheſies and Wondrous Diſpenſations to the Jewiſh People were from the particular Influence and Operation of the Stars at thoſe Times; and that all Chriſt's Actions, Life and Death, and conſequently our Redemption, depended on the Figure of the Heavens at his Nativity: in ſhort, that Chriſtianity itſelf was beholding to the Conſtellations, that the Goſpel was indebted to the Aſpects of the Stars, and that all things of Religion are from the Poſition of the Heavens.

If the Reader pleaſeth to caſt his Eye on the Margent, he will ſee that this curſed Doctrine was patronized not onely by profeſſed Atheiſts, but by great Divines and Church-men; but let not that offend him, for they were ſuch as belonged to that Church which is ſaid by ſome to be the Nurſe of Atheiſm and Profaneneſs, witneſs the

the ſwarms of Atheiſts in *Italy* and the adjacent Countries. But ſober Reaſon as well as Religion will inform us, that the things before named are above the power of Nature, and therefore out of the reach of *Aſtrology*. This Art hath nothing to doe with ſupernatural Events, with the Divine Oeconomy, and God's immediate Will and Pleaſure. And though in reſpect of things of another Nature I grant the Heavenly Bodies to have an Influence, yet this muſt be remembred, that they cannot Act without the Almighty's Order. *He telleth the number of the Stars, and calleth them all by their Names, i.e.* He hath the full Command and Diſpoſal of them. It is no *Dream*, but a *Reality*, that the *Sun, Moon and Stars come, and bow down, and make Obeyſance to Him.* Which indeed is after the rate of the ſober Philoſophy of the Stoicks, *viz.* That the Firſt Cauſe is not tied to the Stars. Pſal. 147. 4.

Theſe are ſubject to the Prime and Omnipotent Being, who can ſuſpend their Influences whenſoever He pleaſeth. This I ſuppoſe is the meaning of what the Hebrew Doctors tell us God ſaid to *Abraham* in *Chaldæa*, when he ſtudied Judiciary Aſtrology there, *Abraham, egredere de Aſtrologia tua, nullum enim eſt ſidus Iſraeli:* Trouble not thy ſelf about the Stars, for there is not one of them can be unlucky to *Iſrael.* And on this conſideration it might be made evident, that no man can be Poſitive in foretelling future Events by the Stars.

Secondly, Aſtrology is abuſed and perverted by thoſe who attribute ſuch a Power and Sovereignty to the Heavenly Bodies, as whereby they deſtroy the liberty of mans Will, and introduce a kind of fatal Neceſſity, whereupon they ground the certainty of their Prognoſtications. For theſe men fondly hold, that we are all fatally

fatally tied to the Stars: whereas, Man being a free Agent, it is folly to imagine that his Will can be conſtrained. This faculty remaineth Arbitrary and Unconfined, and therefore no Artiſt can Divine what the Acts and Exertments of it ſhall be. It is true that Reaſon and Wiſedom have the Dominion but in few Men. The Generality are led by their ſenſitive and brutiſh part, which is immediately Subject to the Influence of the Heavens. But it is not impoſſible, nay, it is eaſie by the aid of Divine Grace, and by a reſolute Reſiſting, to avoid their Operation upon us. Prayers and Endeavours fruſtrate the Stars, for their Influence is not inevitable, ſo as to force any Man's Will: and hereupon it is undeniably conſequent, that voluntary Actions cannot be Infallibly foretold. I have ſhewed already that *Supernatural Actions* cannot be predicted by the Stars: Now I believe it will as palpably

palpably appear, that *Free and voluntary ones* cannot. As the things which depend on the *mere Power and Pleaſure of God*, ſo thoſe that iſſue from the *Freedom* and *Election of Man* are beyond the reach, and out of the ken of Aſtrological Predictions. Mens *Wills* are the Planets that guide them, and make them *Erratical*. It is not in the power of Aſtrologers to fix theſe, and to bring them within the ſphere of their Knowledge. We ſee and obſerve that their Conjectures are uncertain concerning the change of Weather. How often may they be confuted in their Predictions of Rain, Snow, Froſt, Winds, *&c.*? Some have writ down the weather quite contrary to their Prognoſticks (as *Buchanan* dealt with his Almanack above fifty Years together, and as the Earl of *Mirandula* hath obſerved) and have found that what they ſet down came neareſt to the truth. If an Aſtrologer then

faileth

faileth ſo much in telling the weather, how much more in undertaking to determine thoſe Events which depend on the Will and choice of Man? If he cannot exactly foretell the Changes of the Clouds and Elements, how will he be able to acquaint us before-hand with the Alterations in Families and Kingdoms, which are more uncertain? It is by reaſon of ſuch bold Pretenders and Undertakers, that Aſtrology is rendred vile and ſcandalous, and the Profeſſours of it looked upon as Lyars and Impoſtours. For what can be more like cheating, than for a man to take upon him to determine certainly of future Contingencies, when the Objects of his Predictions are every minute alterable by the interpoſal of free Agents, who have power to interrupt the Cauſality of the Stars? For though men may be thus and thus *Diſpoſed* and *Inclined*, according to the different Conſtellations

lations and their Aſpects, yet they are *left free*, and are not conſtrained and forced to doe this or that. And if this be true, the moſt ſagacious Artiſt on Earth cannot punctually determine their Actions, this being an impregnable Propoſition, That nothing can be certainly foretold by Man, which is in the power of a free Agent.

Thirdly, Aſtrology is abuſed not onely when the free Agency of God and Man are infringed, but when the *Concurrence of thoſe other Cauſes* which are requiſite in the life of Man is wholly neglected.

This then muſt be laid down as a neceſſary Propoſition,

That the Tempers and Conſtitutions of Men, and conſequently their Diſpoſitions and Actions, and all humane Affairs which are the iſſue of them, depend upon ſeveral conjoyned Cauſes.

It

It is true that we receive our Complexion and Temperature from the quality of the Heavenly Bodies, but not from them only, but from other Cauſes and Authours. I have granted once and again, that there is a great conſent and intercourſe between the upper and lower World. Heaven and Earth are confederate. Many things are derived to our Natures from above, many of our Inclinations are received from thence, many Events and Accidents are depending on the Aſtral Revolutions, but they do not derive their force from them alone. There are other Cauſes beſides the Prime Efficiency of God, and the free Agency of Men, which powerfully influence on Humane Actions. Say then that the Stars act on the Body of Man, and ſay that the Complexion of the Body ſwayeth the Mind, (as is acknowledged,) yet this Complexion depends on the Temper of the Parents, and the quality of their Seed;

Seed; on the temper of the Air of that Countrey which he was born in, and afterwards lived in; on his Diet and Food he conſtantly takes; on his Education and manner of Life. All theſe, and ſeveral other things make a great difference in men: and the influence of the Stars may be hindred by any of them, much more by all of them together. Though the Heavens diſpoſe to ſuch and ſuch Temperatures of Body, yet they are eaſily changed and over-ruled by the Concurrence of theſe. To ſpeak freely, the Stars act, as all other natural Cauſes do, according to the Capacity and Diſpoſition of the matter they work upon. Now the Diſpoſition of Inferiour Bodies is very different, and on that account they receive not the Heavenly Influences alike. Juſt as we ſee the Effects of Diſeaſes are according to the Diverſities of Mens Bodies, and therefore no certain Judgment can be made of the iſſue of one Man's Diſtemper,

Diſtemper, from what is obſerved in another. For Example, a Phyſician ſees ſuch and ſuch Signs of Death in two perſons who have high Fevers, but though the Prognoſticks are equal in both, yet the Natural Temper of one may be ſtronger than the others, and ſo be too hard for the Diſeaſe and overcome it: but it was not poſſible for the Maſter of Medicks to foreſee this. The Caſe is the ſame here, and it is confirmed by Experience. All perſons who were born under the ſame Planets are not of the ſame condition and Fortune in the World, and on the contrary, the Conditions and Fates of Men are alike (as when many thouſands fall in Battel in one day) though different Stars reigned at their Births: and the Reaſon is, becauſe all men are not alike capable of the Influence of Heaven, for there may be wanting a *Concurrence of ſeveral Cauſes* (which I have before named) to make

make them equal: and it is undeniably true, that the Heavens are not the Integral Cauſes of Mens Conditions and Actions. I infer then irrefragably, That no Aſtrologer can certainly foretell future Events which depend upon ſo many Cauſes, whilſt he is carefull onely to be acquainted with one ſort of them. And from all the premiſed Heads it is eaſie to conclude how ſhallow and imperfect the Judgments of common Aſtrologers are, and what little reaſon they have to be abſolute and peremptory in their Predictions. For the Actions of Mens Lives, and the different Events that happen to them, are derived from ſeveral Springs and Originals, beſides the Heavenly Bodies. A Judgment cannot be made of a Man's Life from one of theſe onely, but from all. The Prime Source and Fountain of all is God, or the Divine Providence, which *Commandeth the Sun, and it riſeth not*

not, and ſealeth up the Stars, Job 9.7. which can countermand the Ordinary courſe of Nature, and particularly that of the Celeſtial Bodies. Or, the ſame infinite Power can change the Temper which was received from the Stars, and cauſe his Grace to check and controll the Influence of their Aſpects, ſo that it ſhall be out of the reach of any humane Science, to make a ſteddy Judgment of any Actions or Events that belong to ſuch Perſons. And as for that other Spring of Mens Actions, their Wills, theſe being Free and Arbitrary cannot be confined by Art; and whatever Actions depend on voluntary choice and determination, cannot be foreknown, unleſs they be revealed by him who is the onely knower and Searcher of Hearts. It is His ſole Prerogative to foreſee future Contingencies which depend on free Cauſes: Though it is true the Devil hath claimed This in all Ages,

(witneſs the many ways of Divination by Oracles, Auguries, &c.) and for this he hath been conſulted and adored by the Gentile World. Beſides, it is above humane Art to foretell certainly future Contingencies, becauſe the Actions of Men, and the Events which follow them are not always, or for the moſt part according to their Wills and Inclinations: for they may be ſwayed and over-ruled by Providence, they may act againſt their purpoſes and Reſolves. Not to mention this alſo, that Hypocriſie often puts a veil and diſguiſe on mens doings. Laſtly, thoſe *other aſſociate Cauſes and Springs* of Actions and Events in the Life of Man, as the firſt Principle of Generation derived from the Parents, and the like, may prove too ſtrong for the Influence of the Heavens, and ſo make all Prognoſticks uncertain.

But

But it will be ſaid, that thoſe who divine by the Stars are conſulted frequently, and it is known that they ſometimes exactly foretell what ſhall come to paſs.

I anſwer, I am not unwilling to grant that they doe ſo, and by virtue of their Art. For I have intimated before, that I am none of thoſe who cut down a whole Art right or wrong, who admit of no Limitations and Cautions in the Subject they treat of, and in the cauſe they undertake, a ſort of men that ſpoil all Sciences, and have done as much harm in *Divinity* as in any thing whatſoever. I make no queſtion but the Stars point out ſome Futurities to us, but it ſeldom happens that we know what they are, becauſe the perſons who are truly skilfull and can direct us, are very few and ſcarce: becauſe the Art is intricate, and taketh up much time, and requireth

a ſingular *Honeſty* joyned with an exquiſite *Knowledge*. For it is not every Well-willer to the Mathematicks can ſet up for Prognoſticks. An Aſtrologer muſt not onely be skilled in the Starry Revolutions, but ought to be a profound Philoſopher, Politician, Hiſtorian, Phyſician, Divine, and in a word, univerſally inſtructed; for he is to look into, and be acquainted with other Cauſes and Springs of Actions beſides thoſe above; he is to attend to divers things, and not to pronounce raſhly: Hear what a wiſe Head uttereth to this purpoſe, Ἡ γὰρ τότων ἐξέτασις οὐκ ἀφυοῦς καὶ ἀγόνε ψυχῆς ὄξι, ἀλλ' ἐν τοῖς μάλιςα εὐφυοῦς καὶ δυναμένης ὁλόκληρα καὶ τέλεια γενᾶν ἔγκυον. The Study of the Heavenly Bodies is not the employment of a rude and barren Mind, but of one that is extremely ingenious and docile, and pregnant with the moſt complete and accompliſhed Notions. An Aſtrologer muſt

Philo *de Nomin. Mutat.*

muſt be a man of great thoughtfulneſs and Study, of mighty Wiſedom and Sagacity, of long Trial and Experience, of exact and wary Obſervation, and in order to this latter he ſhould conſtantly reſide in a place proper for his Employment, a plain champain Countrey, a clear and uncloudy Skie, fit to promote the Obſervations of the Heavens: and on this account I queſtion whether the accurate notice of the Stars can be attained to in Iſlands and ſuch like places. When the Perſon is rightly accompliſhed for his work, and when all things belonging to the Art favour and befriend him, (which is very rare) his Aſtrological Judgments may prove ſucceſsfull. But even then he cannot promiſe and aſſure any man of the certainty and infallibility of what he ſaith, but muſt deſire People to be contented with Likelihood and Probability. This is the true ſcale of Aſtrology, and

he that takes its height otherwiſe deceiveth the World.

I Anſwer again, It is no wonder that they ſeem ſometimes to foretell aright things to come, for this they may doe merely by chance. It will happen ſo at one time or other. But then how often do they feed thoſe who conſult them with Lies? Though the Art be fallacious, yet it may hit ſometimes, and ſo Events may anſwer to the Predictions. Why may they not light on truth by chance? Of ſo many things foretold ſome one will come to paſs. But if the number of the things which happen, and of thoſe which do not, be compared, for one Truth you will find a Thouſand Falſhoods.

This alſo I have to Anſwer, That ſometimes they are thought to foretell, becauſe they ſpeak ambiguouſly, and fond People are prone to

to interpret in favour of the Fortune-teller. Thus *Noſtradamus* (who was Phyſician to three Kings of *France* ſucceſſively) his Prognoſtications are ſo obſcure and equivocal, that ſome of them have been thought to be fulfilled when they were not, and that merely becauſe they are ſo ſhaped, that they may be underſtood and applied divers ways. Moreover, there is Reaſon to believe, that they ſometimes foretell things from a Confederacy and Compact with Spirits. I am confident I am not uncharitable in thinking that ſome of thoſe who take upon them to predict future Events by Judiciary Aſtrology, ſtep beyond the bounds of their Art, and hold Correſpondence with *Lucifer*, that great fallen Star. By his means they may ſhrewdly foretell (as ſome of them have done) the exact time and manner of their own and others Deaths. As *Suetonius*, in the Life of *Domitian*, tells

of an Aſtrologer, who having fore-told the Emperour's Fortune, which it ſeems was not pleaſing to him, and being asked by the Emperour what ſhould be his own, he ſaid he was to be devoured by Dogs. To fruſtrate his Prediction the Emperour ordered he ſhould preſently be killed and buried: but whilſt they were burying him a great ſtorm aroſe, and made them relinquiſh the Corps, and by that means it was left to the Dogs, who came and tore it in pieces and devoured it. *Cardan* foretold the Year and Day of his own Death. One warned *Julius Cæſar* of the *Ides* of *March*, which were approaching, and it is well known that they proved fatal to him. *Picus Mirandula*, who by his Writings ſhewed himſelf *the greateſt Adverſary that ever Aſtrology had*, (as one who was the greateſt Patron, and learnedſt Defender of Judiciary Aſtrology, ſtyleth him) was told by *Lucius Bellantius*, and

Sir Chriſtoph. Heydon. *Def. of Jud. Aſtrol. p.* 193.

two

two other Aſtrologers, that he ſhould die in the three and thirtieth Year of his Age, and he did ſo. This might fall out by *Chance*, as I have ſaid: or, as I am now ſuggeſting, by the *Devil's help*, for he is ready to aſſiſt in Predictions thoſe that too narrowly prie into ſuch Myſteries, and thereby he promotes his Kingdom and Intereſt. And that ſome Futurities of great moment may be diſcovered by his Aſſiſtence is evident, becauſe he is (as the ſacred Writ calleth him) the *God of this World*, and *ruleth in the Children of Diſobedience*, becauſe he is engaged in all the black Crimes men are guilty of, and ſtirreth them up to the commiſſion of thoſe horrid Villanies which are acted: he may in a manner be ſaid to doe them, and therefore can tell that they are to be done. Or, he being preſent at the Clubs and Conſults of the Wicked, heareth ſuch and ſuch things from the Mouths

of

of thoſe who deſign to act them, Or, evil Spirits can gueſs futurities by what is paſt or preſent. They can partly ſee the things to come in thoſe that have been already. Theſe ſubtile Creatures ponder the Nature and Effects of all things, and by their long continuance and experience are skilled in the temper of the Elements, and of Mens Bodies, and the Inclinations proceeding thence, inſomuch that they can foreſee Famine, Peſtilence, and other Diſeaſes, Wars and Deaths. Or God may permit evil Spirits to foretell Events, Suffering them thereby to ſeduce the Wicked, and to puniſh them, or for other Reaſons which are hid to us. From ſuch Conſiderations as theſe it is not unreaſonable to gather. That the conſulting of Ghoſts and Familiar Spirits, in plain terms, *Devils*, is too often palliated under the pretence of Aſtrology. I have it from the Pen of *Paracelſus*, (who ſome think

L. de Præſagiis.

think was a competent Judge in this caſe,) That *the Devil often inſinuateth himſelf into Aſtrologers.* Nor is it neceſſary that he ſhould formally and ſolemnly converſe with them, (though it is probable he doth ſo with ſome:) it is enough for their purpoſe, and the Devil's too, that they tacitly hold commerce with him: an implicit compact may ſuffice ſometimes. And thus the *Dæmon*, or evil Spirit, who actuateth them, keeps them in pay with conſtant Intelligence, till at laſt he gives them the full Reward of their ſerving him in the Regions of Darkneſs for ever.

I hope I have by this time made it manifeſt, that future Events may be predicted in ſome meaſure, or ſeem to be ſo, and yet that this is not to be attributed to Aſtrological Skill. No: This Art, as it is managed, ſeldom reacheth ſo far. If it had light into the hands of Perſons who were both *knowing and good*,

good, it might have come to ſome thing: but as it hath been uſed, or rather abuſed and perverted, no great matter can be expected from it. And to offer yet a farther Conviction of this, and to prove that it is not in the power of Aſtrology, as it is now framed, to foretell future Contingencies, nay, not Natural Occurrences with any certainty, I will lead you to a clear Apprehenſion of it by theſe following Steps:

1. The Hypotheſes they commonly go upon, are not the ſame that we reade of heretofore.

2. They proceed upon feigned and precarious Principles.

3. And more particularly, Their Doctrine of Genitures is fond and groundleſs.

4. They go beyond the Rules of the wiſeſt in the Art.

5. They pretend to tell others of their affairs, but in the mean time know not their own.

In

In the First place, I tender this to be considered, That the *Hypotheſes* which the old Aſtrologers and the new ones proceed upon, are not the ſame, but differ *toto cœlo*, and therefore it is impoſſible that the Aſtrological Judgments made from them ſhould be true, or at leaſt, if they be true on one ſide, they are falſe on the other. *Ricciolus* in his *Aſtronomia Reformata*, hath learnedly ſhewed the variety of Aſtronomical Hypotheſes, and the uncertainty of them; and from thence he moves for a Reformation in the Principles of Aſtronomy and Aſtrology. That excellent Writer will inform us, that the ancient Aſtrology was falſe and frivolous, becauſe it was grounded on groſs miſtakes in Philoſophy, on palpable Errours concerning the Syſteme of the World, as the Ptolemaick Hypotheſis, which is now laughed at. The Moderns will tell you that the fixed

fixed Stars have altered their places, and do not ſet and riſe at the ſame time they did of old, but a Month later. For Example, the *Dog Star* aroſe about the middle of *July* heretofore, but now in the middle of *Auguſt*. The fixed Stars of *Scorpio* and *Taurus* have changed their Site. The Star in the Tail of the leſſer Bear, called the Pole Star, hath inſenſibly crept nearer the Pole. It was heretofore the moſt Southerly Star in that Conſtellation, but is now the moſt Northerly. *Hipparchus*, a famous Pythagorean Philoſopher, who lived in *Egypt* in the reign of *Ptolemæus Philadelphus*, ſaith it was 12 Degrees from the Pole in his days: but now it is not above 3 or 4. And the *Planets* are altered as well as the *fixed Lights*. The Entrance of the Sun into the Cardinal Points (a mighty conſiderable thing in Aſtronomy, and whence the Judgments of Artiſts concerning the Quarters of

Hackwell's *Apol. l. 2. Sect. 4.*

of the Year take their meaſures) is determined by ſome otherwiſe than it was heretofore. Nay, it is known that the Moderns do not agree about the punctual Time of the Sun's Entrance. *Copernicus* and other Mathematicians ſay the Sun is come nearer to the Earth than it was heretofore by vaſt proportions; ſome ſay Ten Thouſand Miles. The Centre of the Sun was diſtant from the Centre of the Earth 24 Diameters of the Earth in *Ptolemy*'s time: now it is diſtant 18. The Sun's *Apogæum* in *Ptolemy*'s days was in the 5th Degree of *Gemini*, now according to *Tycho* it is in the 6th Degree of *Cancer*. Some likewiſe are of Opinion, that the Reaſon why ſo many Eclipſes appear, is becauſe the Equinoxes are tranſpoſed, and remain not what they were at firſt. Now this I ſay, If there be not the ſame diſtance of the Earth from the Heavens that was heretofore, and if the Stars are diſplaced,

diſplaced, there will follow thence an Increaſe or Abatement of their Influences: or, though they be not altered (as I cannot tell whether my Authours fail me or no in their Accounts) yet if ſome modern Artiſts have thought ſo, and have framed their Concluſions accordingly, there muſt needs be ſome alteration in Judgments made thence. And yet theſe Moderns (which is very ſtrange) adhere to the Aphoriſms of the Ancients in the Judiciary part of Aſtrology. The old Hypotheſes are exploded, and yet no new Rules and Maxims are introduced. The antiquated Aphoriſms muſt hold on ſtill, though the Heavens are not now conformable to the old Syſteme of them. Who would not think that the new diſcoveries in the Heavens muſt needs make ſome Alteration in the Judgments made from them? Since many things concerning the Stars are known and acknowledged now which former

mer times were ignorant of, how can it otherwiſe happen than that there ſhould be ſometimes *different*, if not *contrary Obſervations?*

Secondly, their Art is founded, as on ſuſpected Hypotheſes, ſo upon *falſe and feigned Principles.* As to Inſtance, they build upon the *groundleſs Suppoſitions* of the *Zodiack*, that great and ſpatious Circle which containeth the ſeveral Roads and Inns which the Sun turns into in his travelling round the World. Having named *this*, perhaps it will be expected I ſhould declame againſt the *imaginary Signs* in that Circle, for they confeſs themſelves that there is not the leaſt Similitude of a Lion, a Scorpion, or a Crab in the Heavens. If it had pleaſed the firſt Nomenclators, the Lion might have been a Jaccal, the Scorpion a Crocodile, and the Crab a Whale. One of the Conſtellations in this Circle is called *Libra*, but it is no

more like a Balance than a pair of Bellows, nor ſo much neither. But *Libra* is a Symbol of Juſtice, *Ergò* They that are born under this Sign ſhall prove Juſt and Even Men. This it is to argue from arbitrary and fictitious things, as if real Effects were like to be produced from Chimæra's. Thoſe that remonſtrate againſt Judiciary Aſtrology, uſe to be very brisk here, and fly with great Zeal at theſe Imaginary and feigned Signs in the Heavens. But I have premiſed before, that I deſign not Conqueſt but Truth in this ſhort Eſſay. My work is not to run at all adventures againſt an Opinion, but to ſtrike at ſo much of it onely as ought to be oppoſed. I hold therefore, That though thoſe Conſtellations have imaginary Names, yet they may be indued with a real Influence. And the Reaſon why they call them by ſuch Names, is becauſe it is likely thoſe Figures from whence they are denominated,

nominated, (as a Ram, a Bull, &c.) expreſs ſomething of the Nature and Effects, the Power and Operation of thoſe Stars on the Body of Man. However, theſe Names and Figures were appropriated to them to diſtinguiſh them from one another. Waving then theſe, let us conſider the *Diſtribution* of the Signs of the Zodiack, and here indeed we ſhall find mere Fictions and Deluſions. Take this convincing demonſtration of it: Aſtrologers teach, that the ſeveral Countries and Regions of the World are under their particular and proper Signs, that they are all provided and ſerved with their different Configurations: and ſo their way is, when there are Conjunctions, Eclipſes, and the like in theſe Signs, to ſee what Countreys and Cities are liable to the Dominion of theſe Conſtellations. But you muſt note that when the Aſtrologers made the *Diſtribution* of the Signs, there

were but three parts, or rather half of the World known, and the Regions of that known World ſhared all the Signs among them; ſo that if any other parts ſhould be found out afterwards, they were to ſhift for themſelves, and be contented without Signs. Now it happened that *America* was diſcovered ſince, and this is as large as the other Three Parts of the World, and hath not one Sign allotted it. An Aſtrologer ſtill proceeds as if there were no ſuch place in Nature; for if he ſhould allow it any Signs then this new World muſt rob the old one of half its Conſtellations, and by this means the ancient Rules of Aſtrology (on which they ſtill proceed) are baffled and caſhier'd. It is clear then that the *Dividing* of theſe Signs was an idle and fooliſh Invention. Or, to couch the matter in ſhort thus, The old Diviſion of the Signs among the Nations of the Earth was either right or wrong. If

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it was right, then one half of the World hath engroſſed all the Signs, which is as ridiculous and abſurd as can be, and the poor People of *America*, though they be a Moiety of the World, can have no Prognoſticks made upon them. Or if the ancient way of Dividing the Signs was wrong, then all the Aſtrological Judgments of Places of the World before Two Hundred Years agoe, were mere Shams: and as for the Modern Aſtrologers, if they follow *that Diviſion*, they are deluded, and if they make a *new one*, they thereby diſgrace and abuſe the greateſt Patrons of their Art, and they may as well renounce their *other* Hypotheſes and Principles as this, and ſo the whole Fabrick of Aſtrology will be in danger of tumbling down. The order of the Regimen of the Twelve Signs, in reſpect of Man's Body, will be call'd in queſtion, *viz.* why the Head is governed by this Sign,

and the Neck by that? why ſuch Members are under the Dominion of ſuch particular Conſtellations, and not others? And the Diviſion of theſe Signs into Hot and Cold, Dry and Moiſt, according to the Qualities of the Four Elements, or, which is the ſame, the Diviſion of them into Four Trigons, the Fiery Trigon (*Aries*, *Leo*, *Sagittarius*,) the Earthly (*Taurus*, *Virgo*, *Capricorn*,) the Aerial (*Gemini*, *Libra*, *Aquarius*,) and the Watry (*Cancer*, *Scorpio*, *Piſces*,) may be looked on as groundleſs and Precarious.

Next, I am not ſatisfied about their *Diſtribution of the Heavens* into the *Twelve Houſes*, which they talk much of, and of which they make as much uſe in the Erection of their Schemes. When they are to judge of the Events that appertain to any Perſon they fly to theſe Houſes preſently, to ſee what Planets, or other Stars, were ſituated in any of theſe at the Birth of him

him they enquire about. The firſt Houſe begins at the Eaſt-Horizon, and is to be numbred according to the Series of the Signs Eaſtward. In Nativities it is called the Horoſcope, and the Houſe of Life. It is alſo named the Aſcendent, becauſe the Sun aſcends there in this firſt Houſe: and according to the quality of any Man's Aſcendent they tell you what his Fortunes ſhall be. This and the other Eleven Houſes with their Virtues and Properties, are repreſented in order in the following Diſtich,

Vita, Lucrum, Fratres, Genitor, Nati, Valetudo,
Uxor, Mors, Pietas, Regnum, Benefactáq; Carçer,

Theſe Houſes (ſay they) have their particular and diſtinct Relation to all things that can happen to Man, and according to theſe the various Events of Life and Death

are to be Judged of. But what can be more imaginary and fancyfull? It is a mere Arbitrary Invention that there ſhould be juſt Twelve Houſes, and no more or leſs. And what is there in one of theſe Houſes more than in another that ſignifies theſe diſtinct Natures and Properties? What Reaſon can be given why the firſt Houſe ſhould be the Horoſcope, and why Judgment muſt be made there of the Birth of the Child? And not onely in this, but in every one of theſe Houſes there are many things wholly feigned, fabulous and precarious. When you come to take an account of them from the Artiſt, you hear nothing but a mere Jargon and unintelligible Gibberiſh. But this is plain Engliſh, and eaſie to be underſtood, that from conſulting of imaginary and fictitious Houſes nothing is to be expected but imaginary Predictions. And ſo for the *Planetary Hours*, which are the 12 equal

equal parts which Aſtrologers divide the artificial Day and Night into, be it long or ſhort. There are 6 Planetary Hours conſtantly in a day before Noon, and 6 after; and in theſe a Planet is ſaid to reign or rule, and the Hours take their Denomination from the 7 Planets, beginning with *Luna*, and ſo proceeding to *Saturn*, and then beginning again with *Luna*, &c. This, no leſs than the poſition of the Twelve Houſes, ſeemeth to be wholly Arbitrary, and founded on no ſolid Bottom; and I could never find that the ſtouteſt Champion that the Stars ever had, could keep his ground here.

Thirdly, and more particularly, Their Doctrine of *Genitures* is fond and ridiculous. But here firſt I will (according to the Method I always preſcribed my ſelf) grant what is to be granted, *viz.* That as the Heavenly Bodies, which are ſo

ſo great and vaſt, and always ſurround and incircle us, ſhed their Influence and Efficacy continually upon us, ſo they do it eſpecially at our firſt entring into the World, when our Bodies are moiſt, ſoft and tender. Then chiefly they receive Impreſſions from the Heavens, and ſo the Temperament is partly derived from above, and if long cuſtome of acting be added to the Natural Temper and Complexion, here is ſome ground for Aſtrological Judgments in a ſober manner. But the common Doctrine of the *Genethliaci*, and their Boaſts and Undertakings are vain upon theſe following Accounts; becauſe,

1. The Judgment concerning the Complexion and Inclination of Men ſhould be made not onely from their *Nativity*, but from the Time of their *Generation* and *Conception*, when the firſt Lineaments of their Temper were drawn, and the Ground-work of Nature was laid.

If

If any thing be impreſſed on Men by the Stars, it is rather done upon the Seed in Conception, than on the *Fœtus* at the Birth: and therefore the Judgment ſhould rather be taken from that Principle, and from the time of ἐμψύχωσις, when the Infant firſt of all moveth and liveth, than from the hour of the Nativity. And yet I could never obſerve that theſe Diviners trouble their Heads about this, which is the Foundation of all.

2. The Knowledge of the Efficacy of the Stars, as to the Nativity of Perſons, is very hard to come by, for the exact time of Birth is ſeldom known and ſet down. Many can aſſign the Day or Night, the Forenoon or Afternoon, or perhaps the Hour in any of theſe, but not one in a million directly knoweth the *juſt and preciſe time* when he was born. And yet many of thoſe who maintain the Judgment of Genitures ſay, that the Day or Hour

Hour are not enough, but it is neceſſary to know the true Minute of the Nativity, for on that depends the exact Judgment of the Perſon and his Actions. Thus we ſee (ſay they) that the little diſtance between the Birth of Twins cauſeth a vaſt difference in their reſpective Fortunes and courſe of Life, as in the Examples of *Jacob* and *Eſau*, *Remus* and *Romulus*, and others. Theſe Twins, though they may be ſaid to be born together, yet becauſe they came not into the World at the very ſame moment, differed exceedingly in their conditions, and all circumſtances of their Lives; for every ſingle minute the influence of the Heavens altereth. So that according to the conceſſions of Aſtrologers themſelves there is no accurate Judging from the Nativity. If the Clocks went falſe at the time of the Midwifery, all is gone. The Hour (if that would ſerve) cannot be perfectly told, much leſs the Quarter and

and Minute: and yet if there be any failing in the leaſt portion of Time, the Stars change their Influences. Nor can they ſalve the matter (but rather give farther proof of their groundleſs Confidence) by ſaying that if the juſt time of the Nativity be forgot, or not known, they can by a Rule of *Hermes* (which Sir *Chriſtopher Heydon* ſets down in his Defence of Judiciary Aſtrology, *p.* 170.) help themſelves and ſupply the defect. But others, who are not ſo punctual, ſay it ſufficeth that they have a more general account of the time of Birth. And theſe men ſee they muſt be forced to acknowledge this, becauſe it is impoſſible ſometimes that the exact Minute of the Nativity ſhould be known, as when the Birth is retarded by ſome accident or other. Nay, every Child is born by parts, he comes ſucceſſively into the World, ſo that there is a great Latitude in the time of Nativity.

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The Head may have received its Impreſſion from the heavenly Bodies before the Breaſt or the Belly have theirs, and theſe before the Feet and lower Parts can come to have their Doom.

Thus the ſeveral Regions and Members of the Body will be diverſly affected by the Stars. If *Twins* were not born under the ſame Conſtellation, becauſe not born in the ſame moment, but one after another, then for that Reaſon no *one Man* is born under the ſame Conſtellation, for he cometh not all at once into the World.

Moreover, It is againſt the Nature of Aſtrology it ſelf, to judge of the courſe of Mens Lives from their Nativity, becauſe that teacheth that a diverſity of Aſpects cauſeth divers Inclinations in humane Bodies. Now it is known that the Aſpects of the Planets vary much in one day in divers Countries. It is vain then to judge of Perſons of

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divers Countries and Regions from their Nativities. Though many are born about the ſame time, yet the places being different, there muſt be a diverſity of Poſition of the Heavens, and what Star ariſeth in one place in ſuch an inſtant, ſets in another; therefore the Judgments of Aſtrologers in this caſe are uncertain.

Farther, Though I cannot diſprove what one hath related, *viz.* that two perſons born at the ſame time were obſerved afterwards to be of the ſame *Genius*, they were Philoſophers of the ſame School and Sect, and died both in the ſame Moment; and it is known, that as ſome Twins came into the World, ſo they went out together, yet it is as evident alſo, that thoſe who had the ſame Stars at their Births, proved to be of different Qualities and Succeſs in their Lives; and on the contrary, they who were born under different Stars met with the ſame

Valer. Max. *l.* 1. *c.* 8.

ſame Fortunes. An Example of this latter is given us by the great Roman Pleader, and thus urged by him, as a full Eviction of the vanity of the Genethliack Divination, *Omnéſne qui Cannenſi pugnâ ceciderunt, uno Aſtro fuerunt? Exitus quidem omnium unus & idem fuit.* In ſome Battel (as ſuppoſe at *Cannæ*) there fell at the ſame time, and by the ſame kind of Death, Twenty Thouſand Men. If this happened from the Stars, then they were all born under the ſame Conſtellation; but none hath the impudence to ſay ſo: and therefore to argue from the Stars reigning at Mens Births to their future adventures and ſucceſs, is irrational. It is abſurd to believe that all which happeneth in the whole Life, dependeth on that moment in which the Child was born, or that as the Stars ſtood affected at that time, ſo ever after he ſhould act.

Cicero. *l.* 2. *de Divinat.*

Laſtly,

Laſtly, you may ſee how liable the Doctrine of *Genitures* is to Fraud and Deceit, from the general Uſe that is made of it by thoſe who undertake to erect Aſtrological Schemes: For a Perſon and his Actions being once known, they preſently make ſome Star, Houſe, Aſpect or other, anſwer to his Actions, and make thoſe to be certain Arguments of theſe. *Richard Cromwell* his Nativity is one of the meaneſt and pooreſt that ever I ſaw, ſaith a Student in this Art; there is not one Planet here eſſentially dignified. Major General *Lambert* began his March 1659. *Nov.* 3. 10 h. 15. m. towards the North, againſt General *Monk*. The Poſition of the Heavens was moſt ſad, ſaith the ſame Perſon; the Moon was in a *Watry Sign*, therefore he had like to have been drowned in *Yorkſhire*, riding through a River towards his Army. But you may take notice by the bye, (from the ſame hand) that

Gadbury's *Collectio Geniturarum.*

thoſe who are born under *Piſces*, ſhall fall into a River ſome time or other, but not be drowned, becauſe forſooth *Fiſhes ſwim*. *Cardinal Signs* poſſeſſing the Angles of a Nativity make the Perſon moſt eminent and famous in his Generation, ſaith the ſame Artiſt, (the greateſt Actions of the World depending on the Cardinal Points of the Heavens, *viz.* *Aries*, *Cancer*, *Libra*, *Capricorn.*) Thus *Tullius Cicero*, *Guſtavus Adolphus*, late King of *Sweden*, Archbiſhop *Laud* and *Oliver Cromwell* (are they not well ſuited by him?) had the Cardinal Points upon the Angles of their Nativities. *Peter Gaſſendus*, poor Man, becauſe he writ againſt Judiciary Aſtrology, and checked and confuted the Art of *Genitures*, hath all things naught in his Nativity. His ill habit of Body, and worſer (if this Cenſor is to be credited) of Mind, is plainly to be ſeen in the Heavens. Never was wretch

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ſo beſpattered by Man of Art. What work would this man make with the Nativity of the worthy Dr. *Henry More*, if he could get a ſight of it? He would reade his Life and all his Writings in it at the firſt view. He would make the Lord of his Aſcendent plainly ſhew him to be a Retired, Melancholick Collegian all his days, a Philoſopher, and particularly of the Platonick Sect, and (which is as ugly a thing as can be in any Man's Geniture) a profeſſed Adverſary of the Church of *Rome*, and all its Corruptions. Thus, but more grievouſly, he ſhould ſmart for writing againſt dear *Urania*, for daring to inſert his Confutation of Judiciary Aſtrology into the *Myſtery of Godlineſs*, and for Printing it lately by it ſelf. But look you now, becauſe *Vincent Wing* publiſhed a piece againſt *Gaſſendus*, (wherein this excellent Perſon's Objections againſt Aſtrology are pretended to be anſwered) and was *Ibid.*

himſelf a *Well-willer* and *Brother Philomathemat.* his Nativity hath all things good and laudable in it. But then again he tells us that *William Lilly*, his Enemy, though Fellow-Aſtrologer, had the Moon in *Piſces*, a *Wet* and *Drinking Sign*, which made him a piece of a Good Fellow. But I am weary of ſuch light and ludicrous Stuff, and have more ſerious and weighty matter to ſet before the Reader. Onely from this it appeareth, that Aſtrological Obſervations and Genethliacal Judgments are oftentimes the products of a capricious and fanciſull, and (as you ſee here) of a ſpightfull and malitious Brain. And for this Reaſon, as well as ſome Others, (particularly becauſe theſe Men have undertaken to calculate the *Nativity* of *Buildings*, as well as of *Humane Bodies*, of *hard Stones* no leſs than of *ſoft Fleſh*,) the moſt Learned and Judicious Aſtrologers have not aſſert-

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Thus I have ſearched into thoſe feigned Hypotheſes and fallacious Principles on which a great part of Judiciary Aſtrology is founded. And though I do not think the whole Art is rendred altogether vain and uſeleſs by them, yet I aſſure my ſelf that there can be no *true Predictions* from any thing that is *falſe in any Art:* and for that Reaſon the Common Aſtrologers ought not to be confident of their Undertakings, and thoſe that conſult them may juſtly ſuſpect their performances.

Fourthly, Theſe Pretenders to Aſtrology go beyond the wiſeſt Patriarchs and Founders of their Art: they exceed the limits of their Science, and the Sentence is paſſed againſt them by their own Judges. I will name onely two of them,

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but they are the chiefeſt, and of the greateſt Renown.

Ptolem. *Centiloq. Aph.* 1.

The firſt is *Ptolemy*, the Prince of Aſtrology, whoſe firſt and leading Aphoriſm is this, That generals onely can be foretold by this Art, and that thoſe alone who are Divinely inſpired are able to predict particular Events. An Aſtrologer may tell the Propenſion and Inclination of a Man from his Natural Temperament, and this from the Stars; but he cannot from that general Inclination tell what determinate Effects will enſue. He ought to content himſelf with a general Judgment, and not to be definitive in ſpecial Caſes, in particular and individual Accidents. This is the Deciſion of the great Father of Aſtrologers. What then becomes of their *Horary Queſtions*, which deſcend even to the moſt particular and Perſonal Affairs? What Reſolution is to be expected of the Queries about the Marriage of ſuch an indivi-

individual Couple, the particular Events of this Seaman's Voyage, that Counſellor's Cauſe, this Merchant's Adventure, that Soldier's Engagement, the time of the Death of any of theſe, and (rather than they will ſtand out) the retrieving of any Neighbour's Silver Spoon loſt or ſtollen?

Again, it is confeſſed by the ſame Maſter and Dictatour of Aſtrology, that the Influence of the Stars is not Neceſſary and Unavoidable, but may be evaded by Mens Induſtry and Care. Δύναται ὁ ἐπιστήμων πολλὰς ἀποτρέψασθαι ἐνεργείας τῶν ἀστέρων, ὅτε ἔστιν εἰδήμων τῆς φύσεως αὐτῶν. A wiſe man (ſaith he) is able to avert the Effects of the Stars when he knoweth the Nature of them: and he adjoineth *Socrates* as an Example of this, who, when an Aſtrologer had told him his Natural Inclinations, confeſſed them true, but theſe (ſaith he) are all conquered by Prudence and vertuous *Centilog. ibid.*

Endeavours; my Soul hath got the Maſtery of my Body, Philoſophy and Moral Diſcipline have corrected my Natural Propenſions. A wiſe Man hath Dominion over the Stars, he ſubdueth thoſe Motions which come to him from thence, and they are Fools onely who are led by them.

The ſecond great Judge and Rabbi of this Art, is that noted Florentine *Junctinus*, an Authour that Judiciary Aſtrologers deal very much in, and therefore I will alledge four or five ſet Determinations of his, wherein the vanity and (I may ſay) Nullity of the common and Irrational way of Aſtrologizing are diſcovered and condemned. And what he ſaith is the more obſervable, becauſe I take it out of that Treatiſe which is intituled, *The Defence of Aſtrologers*. *Thoſe Aſtrologers* (ſaith he there) *who will needs know and predict all kinds of particulars are Fools*. And in the ſame place,

place, *An Aſtrologer can tell nothing certainly as to ſuch things as concern Man's Will.* This is often repeated by him. Excellently again in the ſame Treatiſe, *The Significations of the Stars are not like the Commands and Edicts of Prætors,* (*i.e.* neceſſary and indiſpenſable,) *but are in Subjection to the Command and Will of God.* And what the Senſe of all ſober Aſtrologers is, we may learn from thoſe words of his, *viz.* Aſtrologers do not hold that the Heavens are wholly and altogether the Cauſe of our Fortunes or Misfortunes, but that they act onely according to the Subject Matter, which accordingly as it is diſpoſed, doth more or leſs receive the Celeſtial Influence.

It might be added that *Junctinus* ingenuouſly confeſſeth, That the Wonders and Miracles of the Old and new Teſtament, being works brought to paſs by God himſelf, and not depending on ſecond Cauſes, cannot

cannot be foretold by Aſtrology. This is the ſenſe of the two great Dictatours of Judiciary Aſtrology, and all the ſober of that Study acquieſce in it. Thus though the Hebrew Rabbies (ſeveral of whom were notable Students and Proficients in Aſtrology, as *Aben Ezra* in particular, the greateſt Divine and Aſtrologer the Jews ever had,) ſay Proverbially, הַכֹּל תְּלוּי בְּמַזָּלָא All things depend on the Stars, yet it is plain that they do not think their Influence is neceſſary and inevitable, and ſuch as carrieth force and conſtraint along with it; for none are more for Free-Will than the Rabbies and the Jewiſh Doctours. And *this Adage* of theirs may be qualified with that *other* which they make uſe of, *viz.* The Stārs neither make a Man poor nor rich; and with that *known one* already mentioned, אֵין מַזָּל לְיִשְׂרָאֵל No Star ſhines with an evil Aſpect upon *Iſrael*, the felicity or infelicity of

Alchiſh *in* 1. *c.* Job.

of the Pious depend not on the Hoſt of Heaven. Thoſe that are good need not dread being Planet-ſtruck.

Fifthly, There cannot be a greater Proof of the Uncertainty and Vanity of Aſtrological Judgments than this, That thoſe Men who profeſs to tell others what ſhall happen to them even in relation to their ſecreteſt and moſt concealed affairs, yet in the mean time know not what ſhall befall themſelves, and are ignorant about their own concerns. Theſe bold Diviners have not ſo much skill as to reade the Deſtiny of their own Families, and yet they will undertake to tell others whether they ſhall be rich or poor, whether they ſhall be long-liv'd or no. Whilſt they ſoar aloft, and with a *Mene Tekel* pronounce the fate of Kingdoms, they are blind about their own little Affairs, of which without doubt they might have a better inſight, than of the Intrigues

Intrigues that relate to the Publick; for it is far eaſier to dive into their own private Fortunes at home, than thoſe which relate to Princes and States, and great Communities. I may take leave then to collect, that thoſe who cannot foreſee the Evils which may befall themſelves, are unable to foretell contingent Events to others. And this is the Caſe of the Men I am ſpeaking of, and it appears from thence how groundleſs their Predictions are. Even the great *Julius Cæſar*, who had throughly ſtudied this part of Aſtrology, and in the very time of War and Buſineſs, uſed to ſet ſome hours apart for it, as he is brought in by the Poet, ſpeaking of himſelf:

——*Media inter prælia ſemper*
Stellarum Cæliq; plagis, Superisq; vacari.

In

In midſt of Battels and of bloudy Wars
I could find leiſure for the Heavens and Stars.

This great Proficient in Aſtrology, after all his Study, had not ſo well conned the Alphabet of the Stars, as to ſpell out his own Deſtiny, nay, not to reade it after he had been *taught it* by *Spurina.*

If it ſhall be ſaid here, That the Prophets of the Old and New Teſtament were able to inform the World of future things of the higheſt Moment, and yet oftentimes fore-ſaw not what ſhould befall themſelves:

I Anſwer, That theſe Holy Perſons were extraordinarily inſpired by God for the good of the World, and the great purpoſe of Religion in it. It was in order to this that they

they were enabled to foretell Futurities: ſtill they were like other Men, as to their own private notices of things. But theſe Men who ſtarted the Objection, pretend not to be extraordinarily aſſiſted, they proceed according to their *Art*: and if ſo, *This* would direct them as certainly to a knowledge of their own Affairs, as to that of others, nay more certainly.

Many other things might be heaped up together, to evince the Uncertainty of the Vulgar Prognoſtications of Aſtrologers, as namely, that if we conſult ſeveral of them, we ſhall be ſure to hear our Doom in a different, nay contrary manner: That thoſe Aſtrologers who are ſubject to a bad Fate (though their Skill may be good) are apt to err in their Judgments: (It is one of the Aſtrological Aphoriſms in *Gadbury*: A tickliſh buſineſs indeed! We had need firſt conſult Mr. Aſtrologer's Nativity, before

fore we desire him to search into our own:) That this sort of Men generally are made up of vain Boastings, and their Art is calculated for Pride and Ostentation. Any one that readeth *Cardan*, who was the chiefest of their Order, will find that he vaunted of more than he did, or ever could doe. But it happened that the Lies he telleth in one place are confuted by him (having forgotten them) in another, as concerning several Cures of Diseases, his Familiar Spirit, and Astrological Achievements. And This is the fault of all the Tribe, I mean of those who are guilty of Abusing the Astrological Science, and there cannot be a greater Argument of their Folly and Vanity.

On all these Considerations aforesaid, the unlawfull Use of Astrology hath been condemned by Decrees, and Anathematized by Councils. It was prohibited by the Edicts of *Constantine* the Great, *Theodosius*,

Decret. 2. pars. c. 26. Concil. Tolet. 1. Lateran. Conc. sub Jul. *&* Leone.

Codex de Malefic. & Mathemat. leg. 2. Leg. 5, & 7.

odosius, *Justinian*, and other Christian Emperours and Kings. *Ars autem Mathematica Damnabilis est, & interdicta omnino.* And a Capital Punishment by the same imperial Law was inflicted on those who consulted these *Mathematici*; for that was the Word then for all kinds of Unlawfull Diviners and Soothsayers, whether they practised by the Stars, or any other ways; not that *Mathematicks* was *Damnable*, and that every one who *described a Circle*, fetched the *Devil* into it presently, but because some of those who were conversant in Geometrick Figures, and other Mathematical Studies, practised also in Unwarrantable Divination, and thence *Mathematici* became the Name of all that did so. The Ancient Fathers speak freely against these rash Astrologers, who tie the Actions of Men to the Stars, and pretend to foretell future Contingencies and Events, that are Free.

Origen. *l. contra Fatum.* Greg. Nyss. *l. de Fato.* Euseb. *de Præp. Evang. l. 6.*

One

One of them especially, and he of as great Learning as any, and (which is yet more) who in his Youth had been of the Tribe of Diviners and Astrologers, being at length converted took occasion often in his Writings to condemn the Folly and Impiety of their Practices; though he was still willing to give Astrology its due, as when he said, *In illa perspicuitate corporum Cœlestium non omnes omnino motus Animi latere*: which is no other than what I have asserted, *viz.* That it is possible to arrive to a Notice of some Motions and Inclinations of the Mind from the Astral Influences on the Body. And thus it appeareth that the indirect and unwarrantable course of Divining by the Heavenly Bodies was disallowed by the *Church*, forbid by *Councils* and *Synods*, punished by the *Imperial Constitutions*, confuted by the learnedst and most pious *Fathers*, it being an impious and foolish Enter-

Augustin. *de Gen. l.2. c.21.*

prize, directly againſt the Doctrine of Divine Providence, and the Exerciſe of Chriſtian Faith; it being the Mother of Superſtition, the guide to diſtruſting in God, and in ſome to downright Atheiſm. Nay, *Picus Mirandula* hath ſhewed in ſeveral Citations, that even the great Philoſophers and Wits among the *Pagans* deſpiſed the Follies of Aſtrology and Prediction from the Stars. It is the joint Teſtimony of Hiſtorians, that the *Mathematici* were often expelled the City of *Rome*, and even baniſhed out of *Italy* by the Emperours; though we are told indeed that they were ſometimes called back again, as *Tacitus* ſpeaking of theſe Aſtrologers, ſaith they are a ſort of Men *quod in Civitate noſtra & vetabitur ſemper & retinebitur.* Hiſt. l. 1. Thus among all wiſe and ſober Perſons whether *Chriſtians* or *Gentiles*, the common Prognoſticatours have been odious and execrable.

Liv.
Tacitus.
Valer. M.
Dio.

If

If my buſineſs lay in this ſort of Studies, I would preſent the Reader with the excellent Senſe of thoſe Authours who have with equal Solidity and Acuteneſs, encountred this Impoſture. Such were *Sextus Empiricus* of old, in his *Hypotyp. Pyrrhon.* *Cicero*, *l.* 2. *de Divinat.* *Phavorinus* in an Oration againſt Aſtrologers, in *A. Gellius*, *l.*14. *Plotinus*, *l.*3. *Ennead.*2. *Marcilius Ficinus*, that Learned Platonick Philoſopher and Aſtronomer, who writ *Contra Judicia Aſtrologorum.* *John Picus*, Count of *Mirandula*: *Thomas Eraſtus*, a Phyſician and Philoſopher: *Cauſinus* the Jeſuite, *De Domo Dei:* The admirable *Gaſſendus*: *Chamber* (publick Lecturer of Aſtronomy in *Oxford*) his Treatiſe againſt Judiciary Aſtrology: *Barclay* in his *Argenis*, where *Nicopompus* is introduced, making an ingenious ſpeech on this Subject. I could mention others, and ſet before you the ſumm of their ſeveral Topicks, but that it

would ſeem to favour ſomething of the vanity of thoſe I am confuting, who are wont to boaſt of Authority, great Names and numerous Arguments. But waving theſe, let it ſatisfie the Religious Enquirer, that the Aſtral Influences, in that Senſe which I have explained them, are diſallowed by the Infallible Teſt of all verity, the *Holy Scriptures*. When the Divine Law ſaith, *There ſhall not be found among you any one that uſeth Divination*, or more exactly, according to the Original, in the plural, *he that divineth Divinations*, Deut. 18. 10. the unlawfull foretelling by the Stars is here forbid among other ways of Divining. And to this Prohibition perhaps may allude that Jewiſh Saying, (though I know it admits of another ſenſe) *The Law is not found among Aſtrologers and Genethliacks*. This impious Art is reckoned among the Abominations of the Gentiles in that fore-named place, *Jer.* 10. 2.

Sepher. Hammuſ.

Where

Where the Iſraelites who were ſhortly to be Captives among the Chaldeans are forbid, not onely to learn their Idolatrous Aſtrology, and worſhipping the Heavenly Hoſt, but even to attend to their Divination by thoſe ordinary Stars, which being natural and uſual cannot be ominous. This likewiſe is condemned in *Iſa.* 47. 11, 12, 13. where, after God by the Prophet had told the Chaldeans (who were hugely addicted to Aſtrology, and firſt brought in the abuſe of it) that *Evil ſhould come upon them, and they ſhould not know from whence it riſeth,* (whereas they pretended to ſpy the Cauſe of all Events in the Stars) *and miſchief ſhould fall upon them, and they ſhould not be able to put it off:* (whereas the guiſe of the great Stargazers was to flatter thoſe who conſulted them with Promiſes and Aſſurance of happy Occurrences) in an Ironical and upbraiding manner he addeth, *Let now the Aſtrologers and*

Star-gazers and monthly Prognoſticatours, ſtand up and ſave thee from theſe things that ſhall come upon thee. In which bitter Sarcaſm that Aſtrology which aſcribes all to the Stars is exploded, and their folly is laid open who truſt not in God, but in the Heavenly Bodies, or rather in thoſe who pretend to know by obſerving them when Kingdoms ſhall be ſaved or deſtroyed.

And thus I have largely ſet down the *true Uſe* of the Heavenly Bodies, and alſo the too frequent *Abuſe* of the Knowledge of them. I have endeavoured rightly to ſtate the Controverſie, and to diſtinguiſh between Art and Impoſture, between True Knowledge and Vain Pretences. And if this were impartially done in all Sciences, we ſhould ſee an unſpeakable advancement of all ſorts of Learning, and Truth would have an uncontrollable Dominion in the World. I have made it my buſineſs to *fix the true Limits and Boundaries of Aſtro-*

Aſtrology (a thing which I ſaw was very much neglected.) It hath alſo offended me to ſee how ſome Writers treat all the *Sons of Urania* with Contempt and Deriſion, and affect jeering rather than arguing: therefore I have been carefull to carry my ſelf inoffenſibly as to this. It becomes ſober perſons to diſpute with Civility. It is beſt to conſute an Opinion without railing at them that hold it. In ſhort, I have been ſo juſt and equal as to give Aſtrology its due, and no more. It was truly ſaid by an obſerving Perſon, *Eſt Aſtronomiæ nobilis & glorioſa Scientia, ſi Clientelam ſuam intra Moderationis metas cohibeat: quam ſi licentiore vanitate excedat, non tam Philoſophiæ ſpecies quàm Impietatis decipula eſt.* The Knowledge of the Stars is a noble and glorious Science, if it keepeth its Retainers within the bounds of Moderation; but if it once leaps over thoſe, and runs into Vanity and Extravagancy,

Johan. Sarisb. *de Nug. Cur. l.* 2. *c.* 19.

it is no longer a part of Philoſophy but becomes a wicked Engine to entrap Mankind. Here is the right and the wrong ſide of the Art. Take it in the former repreſentation, and it is worthy of our Thoughts and Studies, as without doubt it was of thoſe who lived in the firſt and beſt Times. It is not improbable that *Adam* delivered it to his Children. Thus the *Jewiſh Antiquary* relateth, he inſtructed *Seth* in it, and that *Seth* left the Rudiments of it inſcribed on two Pillars. A Learned Man telleth us of a Book yet extant of *Enoch* concerning Aſtrology. And the *Jewiſh Hiſtorian* in his *Antiquities* before quoted acquainteth us that *Abraham* was skilled in this Art, and was the firſt that taught it to the Egyptians, a People rude and unlearned in that and all Sciences, till he came among them. This was the good and lawfull, the natural and uſefull Aſtrology, but it was ſoon abuſed and cor-

Joſeph. *Antiq. l.* 1. *c.* 3.

Voſſius *de Scient. Mathemat.*

Joſeph. *Antiq. l.* 1. *c.* 9.

corrupted, as Philoſophy, Natural Magick, and other Studies were. The Devil at laſt ſtept in, and with Superſtition and Lies depraved the Practice of it. And now many pretend to doe that by this Art which it is utterly impoſſible to doe, either by it, or any other. Eſpecially the Maſters of Genethliacal Predictions are raſh and daring, and deliver things falſe and abſurd, having no ground for their Principles and Concluſions. How often do theſe *Barchocabs*, Sons of the Stars, prove *Barcoziba's*, Sons of a Lye and Impoſture? How frequently do thoſe ignorant or inconſiderable People who conſult them, thoſe who affect to have their Purſes emptied, ſo their Heads may be filled with pleaſing Fancies, how frequently are they heard to complain of theſe cheating Oracles? Nor do I ſpeak this to diſparage and blacken the whole Science, for I know it is uſual with the Profeſſours of an Art to carry

ry it farther than is fitting and lawfull. The common Aſtrologers undertake more than they know they can give a fair account of: and they are not the onely People that doe ſo. Some Phyſicians and Lawyers will put their Patients and Clients on mad Adventures, and ſome that pretend to Divinity will aſſert any thing. It is unreaſonable therefore to condemn all, becauſe Frauds and Cheats may be eſpied in ſome. If ſome Aſtrologers attribute more to the Art than they ſhould, that is no diſparagement to the Art it ſelf. The abuſe of the Doctrine of the Stars muſt not make us diſcard the Science. Though moſt of Judiciary Aſtrology be vain, yet all may not be ſo. Though I have offered Reaſons which are able to diminiſh Mens fond Opinions of that Study, and to take off the certainty which ſome pretend to in their Aſtrological Judgments, nay, though all the Rules and Aphoriſms of *Ptolemy* and the

the reſt of the Aſtrologers were vain and falſe, yet there may be ſome Divination from the Heavenly Bodies, and that innocent and lawfull; but this is ſuch a one as is not derogatory to Man's free acting: it doth no more impair the liberty of Mens Actions than the Prophecies in the Old Teſtament of future things infringed the freedom of thoſe who were to act afterwards according to thoſe unerring Predictions. And this I will add, that if God's Decrees and Concourſe are reconcilable with Man's free Actions, ſo may the Influence of the Stars be likewiſe. If the *Abuſe* then of Aſtrology be taken away, and it keepeth it ſelf within its due Limits (which I have ſet down) it may be made ſerviceable to good and lawfull ends, and may juſtly be recommended to the World as the choiceſt Accompliſhment of all Natural Philoſophy.

I have been the longer on this Theme, becauſe the right underſtanding

ſtanding of it is neceſſary, not onely for ſettling our Minds and Judgments about ſo celebrated a Problem as this is, but principally for the full and complete anſwering of the *Laſt Objection* which was levelled againſt the foregoing Diſcourſe. It was neceſſary to ſhew the true difference between the *Ordinary Luminaries of Heaven*, and *thoſe Strange and Unuſual Lamps* which are lighted and ſet up there ſometimes, and to make it evident, that the Prognoſticks which are made from the Aſpects and Configurations of the Stars, are nothing allied to thoſe which are made from the Appearance of Comets. In defiance then of all Cavils and Objections, our Aſſertion ſtands unſhaken and immoveable, That theſe rare and amazing Sights in the Heavens portend ſome ſtrange and unuſual thing to the Inhabitants of the Earth. A Comet is the *Prodromus* of ſome notable Calamity, and is ſent on purpoſe to give notice and warning of it. Take

Take then the Concluſion of all (which will chiefly relate to our preſent Condition and Circumſtances in this Nation) in theſe following Particulars,

1. Let us remember that we have felt the Effects of Comets, and upon that Conſideration let us not be tempted to diſ-believe what hath been ſuggeſted in this Diſcourſe. It hath been proved to us experimentally, that Comets are denunciations of God's Anger, and that the Products of theſe Apparitions are direfull and fatal, if *Fire* and *Peſtilence*, if *bloudy Conſpiracies* and *Inteſtine Diviſions* and *Separations* be any proofs. We have found that theſe Monitors have not been ſent in vain, that they were no *Bruta Fulmina*, no idle and inſignificant Flaſhes, but that they have really done Execution. And if we are not convinced of this, but ſtill remain incredulous and ſenſeleſs, the wiſe Diſpoſer

Diſpoſer of all things may hereafter multiply theſe Prodigies, and cauſe two or more of them to appear together, on purpoſe to upbraid our incredulity and unbelief, and to force our aſſent for the future. *Ariſtoteles tradit & ſimul plures (Cometas) cerni: nemini compertum alteri, quod equidem ſciam.* Though a certain Philoſopher reporteth concerning Comets, that more than one of them have been ſeen at a time, yet I cannot find (ſaith the Natural Hiſtorian, who had made a Collection out of all Hiſtories that were extant) that any one hath obſerved this beſides himſelf. But who knoweth but that we (who boggle at this Doctrine) may ſee a *pair* of them *at once*, as *Pharaoh*'s Dream (which was the Sign and Forerunner of a great Calamity that was to enſue) was *doubled*, to render the belief of the thing more firm and certain? I do the rather think this not to be improbable, becauſe both our

Plin. *Nat. Hiſt. l.* 2. *c.* 25.

Sins

Sins and our *Inſenſibleneſs* exceed thoſe of former Ages, and therefore the Divine Hand may ſhew that to us which was never known before.

2. Although we do not yet perhaps feel the ſenſible Effects of the Comets which appeared laſt, yet we have no Reaſon to be confident that we ſhall not experience any. The God we have to doe with is long-ſuffering and ſlow to Wrath: He threatneth before he ſtriketh. Beſides, a Comet may not viſibly and apparently opperate for a conſiderable time. The Evil which a Comet portendeth ſeizeth oftentimes by Degrees. It is a great miſtake to imagin that it ſhall Never come becauſe it hath not viſited us already. Or, the Fatal Seaſon of its Operating may be juſt Entring, but not yet Accompliſhed; as *Spurina* replied to *Julius Cæſar*, who merrily ſaid the Ides of *March* were *Come*, that they were not *yet Paſt*.

3. When

3. When I ſpeak of black Events which are the Conſequents of Comets, it is to be known that it is intolerable Folly and Preſumption to *Determine peremptorily what particular ones* they ſhall be. Many have Fondly and Raſhly ſet down before hand the *Particular Events* of ſuch and ſuch Comets, but they have thereby rendred themſelves obnoxious to the Cenſure of all ſober Perſons. Strange Viciſſitudes, Diſtractions, Perils and Miſchiefs are the Attendants of theſe Dreadfull Spectacles, but it ſurpaſſeth all Humane Knowledge to define Particularly and abſolutely of what Kind they ſhall be. Great Diſtreſſes for Mens Sins and Miſcarriages are threatned, but we know not certainly whether Peſtilence, or War, or Famine, or Which of the many other Judgments is to be Our Allotment. All Comets are not Alike, but of Different, and it may be Contrary

Contrary Qualities, and conſequently the Effects are ſo too. And though one Comet may ſeem to be of the ſame Nature with another as to Bigneſs, Colour, Motion and Duration, yet it may be very unlike in Figure, Place, Time, and other Circumſtances. And perhaps there never were any two Comets of a like Nature as to all things. There is therefore no judging of the particular Effects of this or that Comet, becauſe we ſaw ſuch Events follow another of that likeneſs. Indeed by our Undertaking to ſpecifie directly beforehand the individual Evils that ſhall come, we are ſo far from making a good uſe of theſe Signs from Heaven, that we rather provoke the Divine Anger by our being ſo daring and preſumptuous. Onely this may be done by us; we may *with modeſty gueſs* (but go no farther) that God will trie us with *thoſe Evils which we have not very lately experienced and groaned under*, and

this not onely that we may feel *all kinds of Scourges* for our Offences, but that our *new and unheard of Debaucheries* may be puniſhed with *freſh Calamities*. We may (without limiting and confining God's Hand) expect Famine and Scarcity after ſo great Plenty, nay, not onely a *Famine of Bread*, but *of hearing the Word of the Lord*. We may look for *Invaſion from abroad*, when we are ſo *divided and diſtracted at home*, and that under ſo Gracious a Prince. And truly *this* ſeemeth to be the *Univerſal and Epidemick Plague* deſigned for all *Chriſtendom*. The *Mahometan Creſcent* may in time *grow to the Full*. The *Turkiſh Cymetar*, though often *Blunted*, may be ſo *Edged* once and again, as at laſt to doe *fatal Execution* over all thoſe ſpatious Territories where Chriſtianity is profeſſed, and (which I am loth to add) where the Profeſſours of it diſhonour the Religion it ſelf by their Lives. To be brief, the

Age

Age we live in hath been already an Age of great and wonderfull Occurrences, and we may expect that the remainder of it will produce great and tremendous Changes to the World: ſo that if *Diogenes* were alive, he might now more eagerly deſire than once he did to be buried with his Face downward, and that for the ſame Reaſon which he then gave, *viz.* Becauſe the World would in a ſhort time be turned upſide down. But leſt I ſhould be miſtaken, and ſome ſhould think I am *Poſitive* and *Definitive* in what I ſay,

4. That which I have aſſerted before muſt be called to mind here in the cloſe of all, *viz.* That though Comets are *certain Signs* of God's Diſpleaſure, yet they are not *Neceſſary Cauſes* of the Evils they threaten. Our Doom, I hope, is not irreverſible. Nay, it is certain that He who ſheweth us the Tokens of his Anger, can divert it when He

pleaſeth. How glad ſhould I be if all the Intimations I have given of approaching Evils ſhould be fruſtrated! I ſhall not, like *Jonas*, be angry becauſe *Nineveh* is not deſtroyed.

Laſtly, If all that hath been ſaid amounts not to a Demonſtration, (as I do not pretend it doth, and above half the Subjects that are treated of in the World, and that have evident Truth on their ſides, never reached to *That*: If I have not demonſtrated) that Comets are Signs of impendent Evils, yet this ought to be remembred, that no Man can be certain that they *ſignifie Nothing*, and that they ſtand for Cyphers in the Heavens. The raſheſt Determiners have not concluded that it is impoſſible they ſhould be forerunners of Calamities, and Meſſengers of Divine Vengeance. Now if they prove to be ſo (as the abundant Reaſons and Arguments above

above produced ſolicite us to believe) it will be a heinous Offence if we take no notice of them. However it will be beſt for us to look upon them as *ſuch*, and then, if we are miſtaken, it will be on the *ſafeſt ſide*, and we ſhall err with the wiſeſt and ſobereſt Perſons. At leaſt it becometh us to *ſuſpend our Judgments* in a *dubious Caſe*. It is inconſiſtent with the Wiſedom and Piety of a Chriſtian Philoſopher peremptorily to deny what hath ſome ſhew of Probability. Much leſs will it become him to *make a Mock* of that which may be a *ſerious Truth*, and the greateſt Reality in the World: as *Veſpaſian* (they ſay) made himſelf merry with a Comet that appeared in his days? for being told by one that it portended Ill to him, he jeſtingly ſaid, that that Star with long Hair concerned the *Kings of* Perſia, *who wore long ſhaggy Hair*, and not *Bald Emperours*, ſuch as he was.

Which

Which is thus expreſſed by an Hiſtorian: Οὐκ ἔμοιγε, εἶπεν, ἀλλὰ τῷ τῶν Πέρσων Βασιλεῖ προσπαίνει· ἐκεῖνοι γὰρ κομῶσι, ἐγὼ δὲ φαλακρός εἰμι. Although *Dio* relateth that he ſpoke it of the *King* of *Parthia*, yet it is moſt probable that he reflected on the *Perſians*, who were known by their long Hair, and thence were called Κομῆται by the Father of Hiſtory. Far be it from us, who are a Civilized People, and (which is yet higher) a Nation profeſſing Chriſtianity to jeſt with Heaven, and exerciſe our Drollery on thoſe rare and ſtupendious Appearances which we have ſo great Reaſon to be perſuaded are the *Almighty's Meſſengers*, a ſort of *mute Prophets* ſent to inſtruct us in our Duty, and to be forewarnings to us of the Wrath to come. Let us rather be directed by theſe Heavenly Signs, as the *Magi* were of old by an unuſual Star that appeared to them, to ſeek our Saviour.

Xiphilinus Aurel. *Victor.* Sueton. *in* Veſpaſ. c. 23.

Herodot. *l.* 6. *c.* 19.

our. Let us *prepare* for God's Judgments by Repentance and Amendment of Life, and by theſe excellent Preparatives let us endeavour, if it be poſſible, to *prevent* them. Let us abandon thoſe *Sins* and *Vices* which we may juſtly believe are pointed at by theſe Signs from Heaven. *Thoſe, thoſe* are the *direfull Prodigies* which threaten *Chriſtendom* at this day. Thoſe are as Ominous and Preſaging as all the Glaring Comets that have ſhaked their fiery Trains over our Heads.

Let us therefore, as we are deſirous that God's Judgments may be averted, and his Bleſſings conferred upon us, as we are willing that *Chriſtianity* ſhould thrive and get ground in the World, as we tender the Well-fare of the *Church*, which is the Pillar and Ground of Truth, as we hope to have the *beſt* and *pureſt Religion* (derived from Chriſt and his Apoſtles) continued amongſt us to all ſucceeding Genera-

Generations, and as we wiſh well to our *Countrey*, the moſt flouriſhing and Happy Region under Heaven, let us break off our Sins by Repentance, and a ſpeedy Reformation of our Manners; which was the principal thing *Deſigned*, and I hope will partly be *Effected* by this Diſcourſe.

FINIS.